

Mary Wheelwright
HINTS

TO THE
PUBLIC, AND THE LEGISLATURE,
ON THE
NATURE AND EFFECT

OF
Evangelical Preaching.

BY A BARRISTER.

PART THE FIRST.

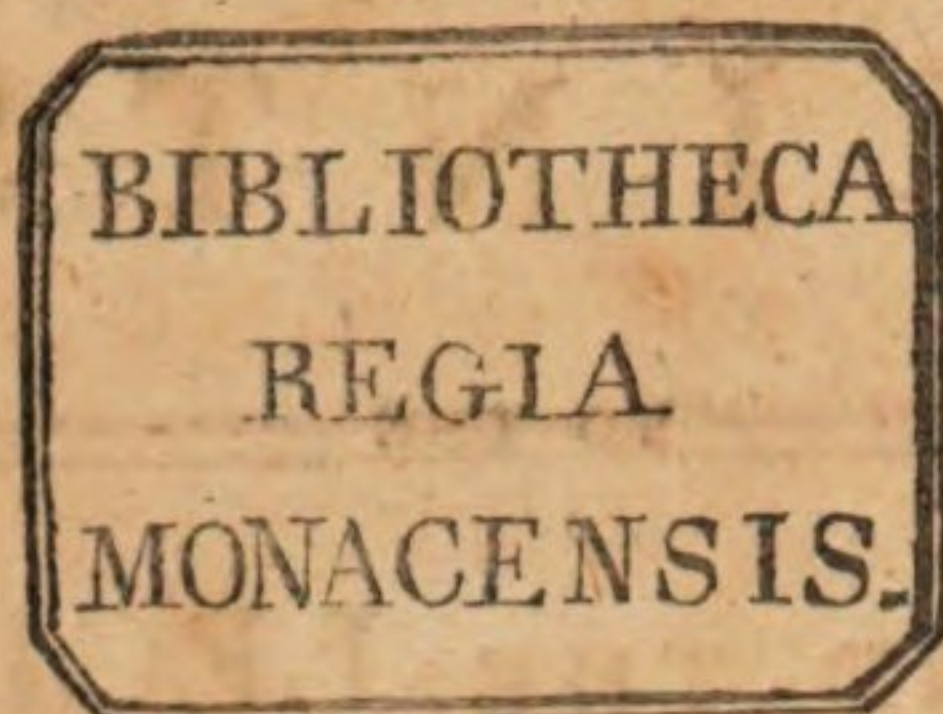
—“ I am astonished at the tranquil courage of any man who can quietly see that a loaded cannon is brought to bear upon him, and that a Fool is sitting at its touch-hole with a lighted match in his hand. And yet, my lords, upon a little reflection, what is it, after what we have seen, that should surprise us, however it may shock us?—What have the last ten years of the world been employed in, but in destroying the landmarks of rights, duties, and obligations; in substituting sound in the place of sense; in substituting a vile and canting methodism, in the place of social duty and practical honour; in suffering virtue to evaporate into phrase, and morality into hypocrisy and affectation.”

CURRAN'S Speech in the cause of the King against Johnson, Feb. 4th, 1805.

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HINTS,

&c.

WHEN we behold a gradual but striking alteration unfolding itself in the manners and morals of a people, it is matter of some curiosity, since we are touched so nearly by the effects, that we examine a little into the cause. We have nearly a million of inhabitants in this metropolis alone ;—if therefore any large number of persons acting with united force, and with one impulse, upon the MORALS of this vast body, and elevating themselves into the high and awful station of public Teachers, by degrees get the direction of the mind and the disposal of the conscience of all the lower or-

ders of which this vast Community is composed, it is worth our while to inquire a little into the actual *nature*, that we may determine somewhat of the probable *effect* of the principles which this body of spiritual Directors inculcate—It is matter of prudence, as well as curiosity, to ascertain what shape the popular mind is likely to take, when in due season, it shall come out of the mould in which it is thus to be cast.

One generation, says Solomon, passeth away, and another generation cometh.—Whether each has improved upon the former, it might be difficult to decide ; but however this may be, there seems to be still room for improvement, whatever may be the velocity with which we are speeding towards perfection.

Many and various, in the present generation, are the new systems to which the old have given place. We have a new System of agriculture—a new system of gardening—a new system of physic—a new system of politics—and to crown the catalogue, we have a New System of RELIGION, a system which bids fair to explode the old, and to answer fully all the expectations of those who have framed it.

Thanks to the indefatigable zeal of these NEW REFORMERS, we are fast emerging from a state of *moral* darkness to a blaze of *marvellous* light; and this light is fast spreading itself into every mind which its rays can be made to penetrate.

Novelty has been justly termed the spice of life. We have had the old Gospel for upwards of eighteen centuries, and the *moral law* contained in it was, to our pious forefathers, the rule of life. Taking that gospel for their guide, they were taught that this present world was a state of trial,—that every man had certain talents committed to him, some ten, some five, some one—that to whom much was given, from him much would be required;—and that all were accountable hereafter for the abuse of the talents, or means of improvement, respectively received.—And the Preacher of *that* gospel when in those days he assembled his congregation together, exhorted them to an earnest and un-failing attention to this their future responsibility; he urged them never to degrade that nature which God had dignified with the noble gift of reason, but so to act as not to shew

themselves unworthy of that invaluable privilege, but apply it to the noble purposes for which it was bestowed.—The obvious duty of conforming to this advice, was *then* felt, and a frequent meditation upon the consequences of neglecting it, served to strengthen their resolutions to shun whatever might tempt them to disregard it.

We are weak enough to call these the good old times. Alas ! they were sadly unsound in the faith. This primitive pastor, in the simplicity of his heart, fancied himself in the discharge of his duty, he never dreamed that all this made no part of his sacred office. Let us attend to one of the **NEW GOSPEL PREACHERS** that we may learn from themselves, and in their own words, how the duty of reforming vice is to be discharged, and in what manner the wicked are to be entreated to turn from their wickedness, and live.

“ I shall not declaim,” say Dr. Hawker, “ on the moral excellence of human nature, while our church prayers with one voice continually declare that we have no health, no excellence in us ; neither shall I recommend human

strength to exert itself in acts of moral virtue towards their own salvation.”*

When it is thus publicly announced, that the new gospel preachers will *not recommend* what the apostles of the old christian dispensation *recommended*, and that too most strongly and most strenuously, and which they enforced by all the motives and all the sanctions which that dispensation reveals, we can readily perceive how enticing such an assurance must be, and what a concourse such an intimation must draw together. Dr. Hawker accordingly is followed by his crowd of *dear hearers*, whenever his visit to London from Plymouth is made known amid the congregations of the faithful.

MR. COLQUHOUN in his excellent and valuable Treatise on the POLICE OF THE METROPOLIS, informs us, and his information is warranted by a pretty correct estimate, that in this city of

* Solemn Questions for Serious Christians, by Robert Hawker, D. D. Vicar of Charles, Plymouth. The better to extend the numerous tracts of these Evangelical Divines, their price is adapted to the lower classes. The tract from which they may derive the above intelligence, is price two-pence, or 12s. 6d. per hundred, to *those who buy them to give away*.

London, including all classes of criminal and depraved persons,—“above twenty thousand individuals rise every morning without knowing how or by what means they are to be supported through the passing day, and in many instances, where they are to lodge the succeeding night.” Should any one or more among those wretched victims of vice and imprudence, when left to solitude and their own conscience, feel such a degree of remorse and penitence as should lead them into a place of worship, it is to be hoped, that they would there find some humane *moral* Teacher, who would dissuade them from vice by an affecting display of its consequences, would teach them how virtuous habits may best be formed, and evil temptation best overcome;—who would adjure them as they value their present and eternal peace, to forsake for ever their accustomed haunts of wickedness, and strive to support themselves by honest labour, that by their future amendment of life they may lay a foundation of hope for that pardon which is promised only to contrite and penitent offenders.—This *moral* preacher would be encouraged so to do, not only by the dic-

tates of his own heart, but also by the animating words of that apostle,* who has said: “Brethren, if any one of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”—But the new *Evangelical* Reformer not satisfied with silently neglecting to convert the ignorant and unhappy criminal from the error of his way—not content with forbearing to urge him to use the *means* of grace, that he may attain the *hope* of glory, circulates a public notice and acknowledgment in the shape of a pamphlet, that **HE SHALL NOT RECOMMEND HUMAN STRENGTH TO EXERT ITSELF IN ACTS OF MORAL VIRTUE TOWARDS ITS OWN SALVATION.**

Having paused a little to reflect on the intelligence thus sent forth to circulate itself into all the alleys and bye streets, and among all the lower orders in this overgrown Capital, let us attend a little further to this Evangelical Doctor's declaration of, what he *will not* do:

* James 5, 19.

It is taken from the same little Manual of Piety in which the former is recorded.—“ If (says he) I do from my heart believe in *our* church doctrine, of the fallen, sinful, helpless, miserable state of human nature, *all the* parts of my preaching, as well as my conduct in the world will carry with it a suitable correspondence.”

It must obviously be of prodigious benefit to the community, that all should be made to believe in this *evangelical* doctrine, that God made them originally sinful and depraved, if as we are told “ the conduct will carry *with it a suitable correspondence,*” and the likelihood that it will do so is certainly very great, since it is every way calculated to produce that effect. It might perhaps be more serviceable, since “ it is God that hath made us, and not we ourselves,” if instead of vilifying him by debasing and sinking into contempt the work of his hands, we strived to preserve our minds as pure, and our conduct as irreproachable as in the days of our infancy.—If we look abroad into the world, we shall find little difficulty in accounting for the depravity that may be seen on

all sides, without placing it to the account of the great Author of Nature.

For my part, I do not hesitate to say, that with respect to the *origin* of that *corruption* which is so very visible amongst us, I prefer the plain intelligible account, as given by that very worthy and valuable magistrate MR. COLQUHOUN, to all the mysterious jargon and blasphemous nonsense that CALVIN and his followers ever uttered from his days to the present.

“ Poverty (says this sound practical writer) is no where to be found cloathed in so great a degree with the garb and emblems of the extremest misery and wretchedness as in London.

“ Were we to examine the history of any given number of these our miserable fellow mortals, it would be discovered that these distresses, almost in every instance, have been occasioned by extravagance, idleness, profligacy and crimes—and that their chief support is by gambling, cheating, and thieving in a little way.

“ Allured and deceived by the opportunities which the pawnbrokers and the old iron shops

afford, to enable labouring people. when they marry, and first enter upon life, to raise money upon whatever can be offered as a pledge, or for sale; the first step with too many, is generally to dispose of wearing apparel and household goods; and this is frequently done on the slightest occasion, rather than forego the usual gratification of a good dinner and a hot supper. Embarrassments are the speedy consequence of this line of conduct, which is often followed up by idleness and inactivity. The alehouse is then resorted to as a desperate remedy, where the lazy and dissolute will always find associates, who being unwilling to labour, resort to crimes for the purpose of supplying an unnecessary extravagance.

“ It is truly pitiable to behold the abject condition of the numerous classes of profligate parents who, with their children, are from invincible and growing habit, constantly to be found in the tap-rooms of public-houses; spending in two days as much of their earnings as would support them a week comfortably in their own dwellings; destroying their health, wasting their time, and *rearing up their children* to be

prostitutes and thieves, before *they can distinguish between right and wrong.*

“ In the city of London, and within the bills of mortality, there are at present 5204 licensed public-houses, and it is calculated that the money expended in beer and spirits by the labouring people only, is upwards of three millions sterling a year.

“ A moment’s reflection (he adds) will shew how much these unfortunate habits lead to *destroy the moral principle* and to engender crimes.”

Now it may be very *evangelical* to trace all this mass of enormity up to the author of *our NATURE* as its first cause, but it is certainly not very prudent, nor very pious, to preach in the ears of all these profligate parents, that this their shocking state of *depravity* is *original*, and not the effect of acquired habit; that they are sinners by *nature*, and not in consequence of *corrupt example* and *wilful* misconduct, because, having once taken this *gospel*, it will furnish them with an unfailing apology for their vices, and send them back well satisfied to return again to their old haunts: for they will

reason thus,—If to sin is *our nature*, then to sin is not blameable, any more than for a bird to fly, or a duck to swim, for such is *their nature* and their conduct, like ours, does but carry with it a *suitable correspondence*.—When such doctrines are delivered for the instruction of the lower classes, and pressed upon them as making the most important and essential article of the Christian faith, they must immediately perceive that all this *sin*, in every deformed shape which it assumes in London and elsewhere, is very *natural*, and that of course the reverse of all this, would be very *unnatural*, and they will be too *evangelical* to act in opposition to *nature*.

There are two hundred and forty six places of worship of the established religion, in this metropolis.—“When it is recollected (says Mr. Colquhoun in his Treatise before cited) that large sums are annually expended by Societies instituted for promoting religion, virtue, and good morals, it must be evident, as the miseries of the poor do not appear to be alleviated, and their **MORALS** *grow worse—that there must be SOME CAUSE* to produce effects so opposite to

what might have been expected from such unparalleled philanthropy.—”

We shall, perhaps, presently be able to conjecture to what cause this may be in a great measure ascribed. If those who term themselves *evangelical* Preachers instead of enforcing the *moral duties* of men in society, preach to all the lower orders, doctrines which go directly to *destroy them*, which I shall proceed to prove their doctrines must do, if they have any practical influence at all, can it be wondered at that the *morals* of the rising generation should grow worse. When a clergyman of the old stamp, assembled his flock round him, he taught them, above all things, to shun idleness, as containing in it every temptation to vice; he pressed them to beware of evil company, and evil example:—“Enter not (was his text) into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men: avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.”*—This gospel which was not the gospel of CALVIN, but the moral gospel of GOD, no where taught him that mankind have *naturally* no power at all

* Prov. 4. 13, 15.

to do any thing that is good, and are wholly and utterly helpless. HE worshipped a Being who did not command and expect obedience without giving the power to obey, and that Being he taught others to worship, and that power he earnestly prayed them to exert.—This christian Preacher did not lull his hearers into a false security by leading them to expect a supernatural change in some *future* day of *grace* : but assured them, and the authority which he urged carried conviction with it, that “the *grace of God, which bringeth salvation, HATH APPEARED to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*” *—But it seems the *evangelical* system of teaching asserts, that mankind being utterly helpless and incapable of doing any good, must hear no exhortation to that purpose. Instead therefore, of urging those motives to repentance which the Bible contains, and which can alone lead to any reformation ; this popular *gospel* preacher enters his express protest against any such attempt.—“Confessing myself and people,

* Paul’s Epistle to Titus, 2. 11, 12.

while in the *desk*, to be *helpless* sinners before God, I SHALL NOT, in the *pulpit* cry up the moral rectitude of human nature, nor, in defiance of my own solemn declarations, contend that man *is able* of himself to help himself, and exhort the congregation to do that which just before, we all declared we are *incapable of doing*.” *

But if the *preacher* cannot help us, and we cannot help *ourselves*, for what use are churches erected at all? If the whole body of the people should once imbibe this evangelical sentiment, they will soon begin to think the *good estate* of the catholic church much too ample for its means of service. If the whole swarm of thieves, gamblers, swindlers, and pick-pockets which infest our streets by night and by day, are to be taught that they cannot *help* being what they are, and are *incapable*, of themselves, of being otherwise, and that a minister of the church of England shall professedly *forbear* exhorting bad men to amendment of life, conceiving it repugnant to his duty as a *gospel preacher*; the mass of public corruption

* Solemn Questions, &c. p. 7.

will augment pretty rapidly, and that profligacy which already prevails to such an extent, will daily widen its influence; for when you have furnished the whole race of delinquents of every description, with this doctrine—"that they can do nothing of themselves to help themselves,"—they will soon follow it up to the conclusion to which it leads, which is, that their guilt cannot be *wilful*, for if they *cannot* help themselves, the fault is IN HIM who could give them the power but withholds it.—These Calvinistic teachers do well to suppress, as far as they are able, the exercise of *reason*; thus far the public have cause to be thankful, for certainly their *evangelical* premises lead to very dangerous conclusions.

"Why stand ye here all the day idle?" said the lord of the vineyard; they said unto him, "Because no man hath hired us." Surely had they been brought up under an *evangelical* teacher, they would have made a very different reply.—"Because we have no *natural power to work*," would have been their answer "to hire us would be useless, for having no power to help *ourselves*, still less have we a power to

help *others*.”—But in this beautiful parable, our SAVIOUR teaches an important *moral* truth which this *helpless* order of sinners would do well to remember—that he did not live and die to leave them an EXAMPLE they were unable to follow, nor would have commanded any man to TAKE UP his cross if he had not strength to support it.

If the *evangelical* CHURCHMEN* are so fully convinced that “man can do nothing of himself,” why do they who hold this doctrine receive their tythes, or the *evangelical* DISSENTING MINISTERS their maintenance, at the hands of those whom they cannot assist.—If a preacher of this stamp really holds this fundamental tenet of Calvinism, why does he not speak out at once fairly and intelligibly, and say,—“I can take no tythes, I can accept no salary, it would be deceiving you to say that I can help you, or that you can help yourselves; if I could *co-operate* in your moral reformation, I would

* See Overston’s ‘True Churchman ascertained.’ A curious title this; it seems to admit the test which ascertains a *true* CHURCHMAN to be very different from that which ascertains a *true* CHRISTIAN.

not hesitate to accept the reward of my service, but it is the *sole* operation of irresistible grace, which will work in due season, and for that season you must wait.”—Now surely this would be more honest and more honorable than to set up as a guide to the benighted travellers of the moral world, and levy a contribution upon them, while you confess yourself of no more use than a dark-lantern. We expect this kind of candour and liberality from a Physician, and to the credit of the profession be it spoken, we usually witness it. If he pronounces it to be a *helpless* case, he declines taking a fee, because he conceives it to be unjust to fill his purse at the expense of those to whom he can be of no utility.—I confess I do not see why those who declare they can do nothing towards restoring our *souls’ health*, should not act with the same spirit of justice. I know no reason that can be given why the College of *Evangelical Physicians* should have less moral honesty than the College of Warwick-lane.

This doctrine moreover, is as dangerous in its consequences, as it is absurd in its principle. It puts a weapon in the hands of the In-

FIDEL, the most fatal to the security of civil life ; it goes, in fact, to DENY THE EXISTENCE OF ALL MORAL OBLIGATION ; for to affirm that our ability is not equal to our duty, is, in effect, to declare that we have NO DUTY, since no man can be under either a legal or moral obligation *to do* that which he has *no power to do*, the command would be as foolish as it would be tyrannical. Can it be the duty of a dumb man to speak ?—Would it not border on insanity to request an answer from one whom we knew had no power of speech ?—Would any one tell a man that had no use in his limbs, that it was his duty to take exercise ?—It would be mockery. It is clear then, that unless we have a power to obey, the duty of obedience cannot exist. The doctrine, therefore, which *denies* that we have the one, *releases* us from the other.

View it in what light we may, it carries the mind to conclusions equally fatal. If we have no power of ourselves to do that which is right, we cannot be accountable hereafter for doing that which is wrong. We are thus led either to deny the *justice* of God, or to reject the doctrine of a future responsibility. Be-

ing thus led to deny *one* attribute of God, the existence of all the rest are brought into suspicion. Thus it is that doctrines repugnant to reason, begin by making the enquirer a SCEPTIC, and end in making him an ATHEIST.

TRUTH is well compared by Lord Bacon, to a diamond which shews best in varied lights. It must therefore be doing an acceptable service to place it in different positions, that we may have a better opportunity to admire it.—It is this acceptable service which I am endeavouring to render to evangelical doctrines.

But there is one difficulty in the way of this endeavour, which I must take care to remark, and it is this:—REASON we all know is the test of truth; but whenever this test is applied to what is termed *evangelical* truth and it will not stand the trial, the defenders of this doctrine immediately vilify it, it is *carnal* reason, and has no concern with these enquiries. Now give me leave to say, that this phrase, though perpetually in the mouth of these evangelical preceptors, is utter nonsense; as well might we talk, only that our ears are not accustomed to it, of *crooked* straitness, and *diseased* health.

The phrase *carnal* REASON, is just as contradictory, and therefore just as absurd. I am aware that it would be a great loss if this phrase were taken away from the common stock, because it is so useful, when hard pressed, to silence enquiry; for the rule seems to be with regard to a reasoner, if you cannot satisfy his mind, you must stop his mouth. Without some such contrivance, error would never make its way into the world.—When the Catholic divines of past ages differed respecting the *mysteries* of their faith, they referred the decision, as in duty bound, to the pope; but his holiness, who knew that the less *carnal* REASON pried into the *mysteries* the better, wisely enjoined silence on both parties.

I content myself with throwing out this remark to the reflective mind, and return to the subject.

Mr. COLQUHOUN, in his Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis, makes the following estimate, which I think arrives as near correctness as the subject will admit, of the persons who are supposed to *support* themselves by pursuits either criminal, illegal, or immoral.

AN ESTIMATE of the Annual Amount and Value of the Depredations committed on Public and Private Property in the Metropolis and its Vicinity, IN ONE YEAR. Specifying the Nature of such Depredations under Six different Heads, viz,—

1. *Small Thefts, committed in a little way by menial Servants, Chimney-sweepers, Dustmen, Porters, Apprentices, Journeymen, Stable Boys, Itenerant Jews, and others, from Dwelling-houses, Stables, Out-houses, Warehouses, Shops, Founderies, Workshops, New Buildings, Public-houses, and in short every other place where property is deposited, which may be specifically estimated and subdivided as follows :*

	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>£.</i>
Articles new and old, of iron and steel.....	5000	100,000
————— brass	1500	150,000
————— copper	1000	120,000
————— lead	2500	50,000
Carried over..		<u>£420,000</u>

	Brought over	£420,000
Articles New and Old of pewter, <i>Tons.</i>		
solder, and tin	300	35,000
Pewter pots, stolen from 5204		
Publicans	500	*55,000
Small articles of plate, china, glass		
ware, sadlery, harness, and		
other portable articles of house		
and table furniture, books, tea,		
sugar, soap, candles, liquors,		
&c. &c. &c.		100,000
Piece-goods from shops and ware-		
houses, by servants, porters,		
&c.		50,000
Wearing apparel, bed and table		
linen, &c.		40,000
Silk, cotton, and worsted yarn,		
embezzled by Winders and		
others in Spitalfields, &c. for-		
merly 20,000 <i>l.</i> a year, now sup-		
posed to be		10,000
	Carried over	£710,000

Brought over £710,000

2. *Thefts upon Rivers and Quays*, committed in a little way on board ships in the River Thames, whilst discharging their cargoes ; and afterwards upon the Wharfs, Quays, and Warehouses, when the same are landing, weighing, and storing, by glutmen, lumpers, jobbers, labourers, porters, lightermen, boys called mud-larks, and others employed, or lurking about for plunder, viz.

Raw sugars, rum, coffee, chocolate, pimento, ginger, cotton, dying woods, and every other article of West-India produce, estimated at the commencement of the Marine Police Establishment at 232,000*l.* a year ; but now reduced to 50,000

East-India goods, and merchandize from Africa, the Mediter-

Carried over £760,000

Brought over	£760,000
anean, America, the Baltic, the Continent of Europe, coast- ing trade, &c. &c. 274,000<i>l</i>. now reduced by the Marine Police Institution to	
	155,000

Ship stores and tackling, includ- ing cordage, sails, tar, pitch, tallow, provisions, &c. taken from above 10,000 different vessels, estimated at 100,000<i>l</i>, but now reduced since the Es- tablishment of the Marine Po- lice, according to Estimate, to	45,000
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3. *Thefts and Frauds* committed
in His Majesty's Dock-yards,
and other public Repositories,
situated on the River Thames ;
including the plunder, pillage,
and frauds, by which public
property (exclusive of metals)
is embezzled in the said stores,
and from ships of war, (besides

Carried over	£960,000
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Brought over £960,000

the frauds, plunder and pillage,
in the Dock-yards, and from
ships of war at Chatham, Ports-
mouth, Plymouth, &c. at all
times enormous, but especially
in time of war; when public
property is unavoidably most
exposed, equal at least to
700,000*l.* a year more :) making
in all, one million sterling, at
least, but reduced by the Marine
Police from 300,000*l.* to

200,000

4. *Depredations* committed by
means of burglaries, highway
robberies, and other more atro-
cious thefts, viz.

1. Burglaries by Housebreakers,

in plate, and other articles . .

100,000

2. Highway Robberies, in mo-

ney, watches, bank-notes, &c.

55,000

3. Private stealing, and picking

of pockets, &c.

25,000

4. Stealing horses, cattle, sheep,

Carried over £1,310,000

Brought over	£1,310,000
poultry, corn, provender, potatoes, turnips, vegetables, fruit, &c. in London and the vicinity	100,000

5. <i>Frauds</i> by the coinage and re- colouring of base money, coun- terfeited of the similitude of the current gold, silver and copper coin of the realm	310,000
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6. <i>Frauds</i> by counterfeiting bank notes, public securities, powers of attorney, bonds, bills, and notes ; by swindling, cheating and obtaining money and goods by false pretences, &c. &c.	250,000
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£2,000,000

RECAPITULATION.

1. Small Thefts	£710,000
2. Thefts upon the Rivers and Quays	250,000
3. Thefts in the Dock-yards, &c. in the Thames	200,000

Carried over £1,160,000

	Brought over	£1,160,000
4. Burglaries, Highway-Robberies, &c.		280,000
5. Coining base Money		310,000
6. Forging Bills, Swindling, &c.....		250,000
	Total	£2,000,000

“ The foregoing Estimate, grounded on the best information that can be procured, exhibits a melancholy picture of the general depravity which prevails ; and which is heightened in a considerable degree by the reflection, that among the perpetrators of the crimes there particularized, are to be numbered persons, who from their rank and situation in life would scarcely be suspected of either committing or conniving at frauds, for the purpose of enriching themselves at the expense of the nation.” *

In what, let us ask, does all this mass of evil originate ?—Does it not originate in the breach of those *moral* duties which are the sum and substance of *true religion* ?—It is utterly impossible that government can be long held together if this dreadful catalogue continues to increase. But increase it *will*, increase it *must*,

* Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis, p. 609. 6th Ed.

if the inhabitants of that great city in which this system of profligate immorality prevails, instead of being taught to shudder at the transgression of those *moral duties*, the neglect of which it is that produces this shocking catalogue of crimes just now brought under our view; if instead of being taught that the reward of eternal life is promised only to those who persevere in well-doing, and that unless they strive by obedience to merit that reward, they will assuredly lose it in that day when God will judge the world in righteousness, and give to every man according to his works: if, I say, instead of this, they are to be told and assured from the *press* and from the *pulpit*, that no qualification of *merit* is necessary, that they may multiply their offences to what degree they please; that the seducer, the gambler, the drunkard, the prostitute, the sharper, the robber, may all proceed in their career of infamy, that their lives cannot be too impure, or their offences too many or too aggravated; for that when once the weapon of sin shall fall from their hands, (and this it must do when thus worn out in the service of sin they are too

weak to hold it) they will not be precluded, by this their long catalogue of crimes, from the offered rewards of the gospel, for that the gospel does not suspend its favour on the performance of any *moral* duties whatever.

Is it possible such a doctrine can be taught? !!!
Attend to the words of the EVANGELICAL PREACHER:—"As *no merit induced* God to be thus bountiful, so *no demerit prevents* man from receiving such clemency. These indeed are glorious tidings of good things, and great joy to all people, to tell a poor sinner that NO SINS ARE TOO GREAT, NO LIFE TOO IMPURE, NO OFFENCES TOO GREAT, OR TOO AGGRAVATED, when once the weapons of sin are fallen out of his hands, to prevent the blessed influence of gospel mercies. But only reverse the case, and SUPPOSE *that some qualification of merit is necessary* in the objects of his favour, and that these mercies *are suspended on the performance of such and such duties*; what a VAST ALTERATION would it make in the circumstances of the gospel."— *

Thus it seems that all those abandoned profligates and hardened offenders, which are the

* See Dr. Hawker's "Prep against all Despair," p. 10.

corruption and curse of human society, are not accountable for the neglect of any duties, as men and as christians, for they had NO DUTIES TO DISCHARGE, NOR IS THE FAVOUR OF HEAVEN SUSPENDED ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THEM !!!

We have, it appears, for eighteen hundred years deceived ourselves by the old Gospel into a belief, that our DUTY towards God, and our DUTY towards our neighbour really existed, and were duties most essentially binding upon mankind, and that on our obedience to or neglect of them, depended our happiness or misery in a future state ! Our *Saviour* in his comprehensive and beautiful sermon on the Mount, sums up the MORAL DUTIES to which the conduct of a christian must conform itself, if he would enjoy that felicity in a future state, which HE most solemnly *suspended on the performance of them*. And he adds, with an energy that is awful—
 “ Whosoever shall *break one* of these commandments, and shall *teach men so*, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven ; but whosoever shall *do*, and *teach them* the same, shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.”

Let us listen then to the EVANGELICAL

effrontery with which the existence of these duties is again DENIED, and this threat despised. Observe in what a decisive tone of deception the Preacher personates the Saviour of the World, and with what easy assurance he affirms away the truth, and puts his *own Gospel* in its place.

“ WISDOM crieth aloud, not in the temple only, and the courts of the Lord’s house, but in the streets and the lanes of the city, among the graceless, the idle; they who are too graceless to attend the ordinances of duty, and too idle to be concerned for their own salvation. And when Jesus calls, observe who they are he calls. He says, If any man thirst—If any man hear my voice: He doth not say, If any good man, or any moral man; but *any* man—As if he had said, I will have my offer made among such as the world may fancy too worthless to be made partakers of my salvation, and too far lost to be recovered. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. The single qualification I expect, is to believe the gospel: for he that believeth, shall be saved. And even that belief, my Spirit will bestow:

He maketh my people willing in the day of his power. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. And he that cometh, I will in no wise cast out. Observe again the extensiveness, the freedom, the sovereignty of his grace. *All* that the Father giveth. Not one, or two, or ten thousand, but **ALL**. And they *shall* come. What, if they do such and such **DUTIES**? *Not a word of the kind.* What if they perform such obligations? *Not a syllable like it.* It is an absolute promise of the Lord Jesus, founded in his own absolute power.—Here are neither *if's* nor *but's*. No conditions, nor terms. They shall come.” *

Such is the compendious system of evangelical *faith*. The *single* qualification expected, is to *believe the gospel*; as to practising its duties, that is wholly out of the question, for there are none to be practised. “**NO CONDITIONS, no TERMS. No ifs and ANDs,**” only **BELIEVE**, and the whole road to heaven is laid level before you. Never indeed was a system so well suited to the wants of all classes of sin-

* “Prop to Despair.” This Tract, printed separately at a cheap price for the poor, is to be found in the Collection of Dr. Hawker's Works, volume the 6th. p. 122.

ners, whose names are to be found in the **REGISTERS** of the **OLD BAILEY**. It is good news, and they will no doubt search the **Evangelical Gazettes** again and again, to learn the “precious truth,” that notwithstanding the thousands they have ruined by their infamous practices of fraud and depredation, they have still as good a chance, and as sure a title to salvation as the best of men.

Each will triumphantly join chorus in the song penned for him by the Reverend **Divine** himself, and placed at the end of his **Instruction Book** :

“ There is a *fountain filled with blood,*

Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,

And **SINNERS** *plunged beneath that flood*

LOSE ALL THEIR GUILTY STAINS.

The dying Thief rejoiced to see

That fountain in his day,

And there have *I* as well as he,

WASHED ALL MY SINS AWAY.”

The Psalmist says of the wicked man “that he delighteth in blood,” he will therefore be readily enough persuaded to wash himself clean in the *element* of his corruption. His reason will not be shocked nor his faith stag-

gered, to find this element *consecrated* to so extraordinary a purpose.

The community cannot but wish well to the progress of a system of instruction, which tends so greatly to the suppression of vice and the spread of morality !!! We cannot but be sanguine in our hopes of reformation, when the word of proclamation delivered weekly from the pulpits, and dispersed daily in cheap tracts to all classes of society, is—

To the SEDUCER—You have betrayed many that once were innocent, and have brought down many a father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, but add one more victim, for *your life cannot be too impure*, and then—*take refuge in a Redeemer.*

To the ROBBER—You have corrupted many an honest mind by your example, and ruined many an honest man by your villainy; but YOUR CRIMES CANNOT BE TOO MANY OR TOO AGGRAVATED, commit one more fraud on the public, and then—lay hold on the cross.

To the MURDERER—YOUR SINS CANNOT BE TOO GREAT, OR TOO AGGRAVATED—dip your hands once more in the blood of your fel-

low creatures, and then—WASH THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

Such is the plain, distinct, intelligible language of evangelical teaching—such are the principles propagated by means of the press, throughout the whole extent of the kingdom—such are the lessons which are taught to the profligate of every class, and sent into the world at a price that may bring the purchase within the reach of that description of persons to whose reception it is fitted.—Such is the new gospel faith, instilled into the ears of the ignorant in the numerous, and annually encreasing meeting-houses of its professors.—Such is the evangelical doctrine which is daily multiplying its converts and its congregations, while it thins every church of God in which the MORAL duties of man are inculcated, and in which the infinitely serious evil to the sinner and to society, which attend the breach of those duties, are faithfully and fully impressed.

On this subject let me quote the well warranted observations of the DEAN of PETERBOROUGH, whose experience qualified him to

pronounce upon the actual existence and extent of the evil he laments.

—“It is a well-known fact, that in several parts of this country the common people will scarce listen to the sermon of their parish-minister, unless the subject of it be some point of doctrine; and that all preaching on other subjects is sneeringly spoken of as ‘good MORAL preaching.’ Should any person take the trouble to inquire and inform himself, what are the causes and the consequences of this dislike, he would find, I believe, on inquiry, first, that in the parishes, where this dislike prevails, the common people are EGREGIOUSLY MISLED in matters of religion, and misled on this most important subject, not only by a numerous tribe of SECULAR ITINERANTS, but by some also of our REGULAR CLERGY: Secondly, that those deluded and misguided people, who thus express their dislike and contempt of ‘MORAL PREACHING,’ know just as much what it means, as Mr. Wilkes’s rabble about the year 1765, understood of those general warrants which they so vehemently exclaimed against, and no more: Thirdly, that considerable pains have

been taken of late to inform the commonalty of this, that *moral* sermons have been reprobated by some of our bishops in their charges: and lastly, that, if the minister of a parish perseveres in his bounden duty of explaining to his parishioners the ten commandments, and of preaching against all sorts and all degrees of *immoral* conduct, such of his congregation, as have heard from those strolling preachers, ‘who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins,’ that this is not GOSPEL-PREACHING, quit the established church, and resort to the conventicle; where they are sure of not being molested with sermons against *immorality*, and are assured of salvation by FAITH ALONE.” *—

The plain truth is, that to promise the reward of a good life only to those who lead a good life, and to make the threats of the gospel “a terror to evil-doers,” will never be so acceptable to evil-doers, as a system of faith

* Thomas Kipling, D. D, Dean of Peterborough, and late Fellow of St. John’s College, Cambridge.—Vide “Articles of the Church proved not to be Calvinistic,” n. 67.

which assures the licentious, unprincipled, and immoral,—“that the rich tide of mercy flows continually without ebbing, that it is not enough to say that it washes on the shore of the undeserving, but it reaches to the ground of the *ill-deserving*; *not barely to those who have done nothing* to merit mercy, but even to those who have done *every thing* to merit *punishment*.—It rises therefore above high-water-mark, overflows all bounds, and overtops even the tallest mountains of *corruption*.”*—

Surely such cheering news will never want a congregation of sinners to listen to it. The words of our Saviour who makes the future happiness of men to depend on their fulfilling the terms and conditions on which the offer of salvation to sinful man was made, who says “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; But if ye forgive not them their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you.” This

* See Dr. Hawker's “Prop to Despair,” p. 6. This Tract is to be found in the 6th Volume of his Works. It is printed separately on common paper, for the use of the lower orders, that its price may forward its circulation.

moral discourse, these *if's* and *but's*, will never be relished, when a faithful doctor of the new divinity, will assure them there are *none*, and that the grace of God “RISES HIGHER AND HIGHER IN PROPORTION AS THE MISERABLE OBJECTS OF SIN AND INIQUITY HAVE SUNK LOWER AND LOWER.”*—The whole rabble from Wapping, from St. Giles's, and from every haunt of vice and debauchery in all quarters, will flock round the messenger of a doctrine so suitable to their wishes and their wants.

No profligate amongst them could have hit upon a system so well contrived and fitted to the habits of all those, who, lost to virtue and decency, are daily sinking themselves *lower and lower* in sin and iniquity; and joyous indeed must they be to learn that instead of increasing the anger of Heaven against their offences, these offences on the contrary, raise the grace or favour of the Almighty, *higher and higher*.

The tendency of all this gross mis-conception and scandalous misrepresentation, of the

* Dr. Hawker's “Prop against all Despair.”

moral truths of christianity, it is not very difficult to discover; if they are not only to remain uncontroverted, but every week, and almost every day of the week, are repeated again and again in the ears of the idle and ignorant poor, in this populous kingdom, the result, as sure as we exist as people, will be the gradual abolition of all that remains of moral goodness amongst us.—In fact they are taught in plain terms, that moral goodness is completely superfluous.—“The gospel, (says the evangelical minister) is a covenant of *grace*, and not of works, in which Jehovah intended to display the infinite greatness of his character, in giving pardon, mercy, and peace, *without terms*, and *without conditions* on the part of the poor creature who becomes the object of it. *So that every idea of MORAL GOODNESS as a qualification for obtaining it, IS DONE AWAY.*” *

If there are any ATHEISTIC parents, whose children, immersed as they may be in vice and villainy, have not quite extinguished every sentiment of virtue, they cannot better complete

* “Dr. Hawker’s Prop against all Despair,” p. 15.

them in the discipline of depravity, than by putting *evangelical* tracts of the above tendency into their hands.—Not even the jacobin societies of France can furnish their agents in this kingdom, with any doctrines better calculated to banish the fear of a future retribution, and to annihilate all the binding obligations and solemn sanctions of the gospel. No system of doctrine that ever yet was acted upon, could more effectually revolutionize the whole moral world, than this system, the teachers of which have proudly appropriated to themselves the title of **EVANGELICAL MINISTERS**.

It would be well if these reverend gentlemen would explain to the world what it is they mean, when they declare the gospel to be—“a **COVENANT of grace**, **WITHOUT TERMS and WITHOUT CONDITIONS**,”—since it is the very essence of a *covenant* of every kind, that it should contain *conditions*, on the performance of which its validity depends.—It is of great importance that this matter should be rightly understood, since it is most essential that in this town of London, where theft, adultery,

robbery, murder, fraud, and every species of vices abound—that it should not be publicly proclaimed, and privately taught, that the *abstaining from all this*—MAKES NO PART OF THAT COVENANT WHICH THE GOSPEL CONTAINS; which must be true if it is a covenant WITHOUT TERMS OR CONDITIONS. It would be well at least for the sake of society, if these *faithful preachers* would not persuade the multitude wholly to throw aside that covenant contained in the gospel of the New Testament, which HAS terms and conditions, and which teaches us that the only way to find acceptance with God, is by doing his will—A covenant the terms of which are thus distinctly declared.—IF YE WOULD ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS—A covenant, the CONDITION of which our Saviour has himself most solemnly proclaimed, and with equal solemnity, has denounced the awful consequences attending the breach of it, EXCEPT ye repent, ye *shall* ALL likewise PERISH.

It cannot but be a source of immense delight and exultation to the many thousands that exist by daily depredations on the public, to be assured that they cannot by these means

forfeit their claim to that PARDON, MERCY, and PEACE, thus UNCONDITIONALLY bestowed. This class of persons will not fail to say of the Evangelic Instructor, that he “reasons well,” when in addition to what he just before taught them, he adds,—“Besides this, it is distinguished under another character, to confirm the certainty of its operation, it being an everlasting covenant, founded in the counsel of peace which was between the glorious persons of the godhead, before the foundation of the world. Now an *everlasting* covenant, founded on Divine wisdom, in the annals of *eternity*, CANNOT BE FRUSTRATED BY HUMAN FOLLY, in the transient period of *time*. What God hath made everlasting, MAN CANNOT BY ANY AFTER ACT DESTROY.”*—When this conviction shall be rendered familiar to the minds of the lower orders of society, the present state of the POLICE OF THE METROPOLIS will no doubt be proportionably improved. The different magistrates must be greatly assisted in their efforts to suppress offences, by the propagation of such doctrines in

* “Prop. against all despair.” p. 18.

this great town, abounding as it does with offenders against the laws, daily increasing in number. When it shall be once universally believed that no human folly can frustrate, nor any act of FRAUD or FELONY preclude the pardon or destroy the operation of a covenant which existed, without conditions and terms on their part from all eternity ; the whole gang of coiners, pickpockets, receivers of stolen goods, housebreakers, and all the attendant train of criminals who set the laws of their country at defiance, may go on to sin in security within the scope of a covenant which procured them pardon and peace *from all eternity*, and the blessings of which no *folly* or AFTER-ACT WHATEVER can possibly frustrate or destroy.— But as the universal reception of this doctrine (to say the least of it,) must considerably increase the risque to which the property and safety of the community is exposed from criminals ; the community have a right to expect from its evangelical teachers, some security against this additional hazard. We have heard frequently of the alliance between CHURCH and STATE, but if such are the

doctrines to which the ignorant and profligate of this large capital are to be converted, we may venture to predict that this alliance must soon be dissolved or the one will sooner or later destroy the other.

We shall see still more clearly as we proceed, in what manner the Gospel is made to reconcile itself to that neglect of the moral duties of life, which the vices of this crowded city so strongly exemplify.

One would suppose that the bulk of people were so much under the restraint of moral feeling, and acted so strictly under the influence of virtuous principle, that there was some danger to be apprehended, lest this extreme purity of thought and action should come to be considered *meritorious*. An inhabitant of China or Japan, wholly unacquainted with the state of morals amongst us, would be led to conclude that we were a most righteous people, were he to take up any one of the numberless evangelical tracts disseminated throughout the kingdom, and see with what earnestness they entreat every class of men amongst us to avoid placing the slightest dependance on their righteousness,

or encouraging the idea that there is any MERIT in earnestly striving to fulfil their duty to God and man.

The grace and favour of God in a future life, as we are distinctly taught by the new gospel preacher—" *has no respect to meritorious services* on the one hand, nor is it influenced by mercenary views on the other. It is not bestowed as a *reward* for any *past performance*, nor does it look for a compensation *from future obedience*. God justifies the SINNER freely; and imputes to him righteousness without works, which is therefore styled the gift of righteousness."*—And lest the libertine who is running on in his career of sensual gratification, should not think this intimation sufficiently plain and distinct, but should be led in the hours of serious reflection to consider wilful disobedience to the law of that great and glorious being to whom

* " *Sermons* chiefly designed to elucidate some of the leading doctrines of the GOSPEL." By the REV. EDWARD COOPER, Rector of Hamstale Redware, in the County of Stafford; Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Earl of Courtown, and late Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. p. 33.

he is indebted for every blessing as neither just nor *justifiable*, and lest these reflections should strike his conscience and lead him back to the discharge of those duties which as a man and a christian it becomes him to perform, lest any penitent convictions of this kind should influence his future life—the evangelic rector with superabundant industry, again exhorts and assures him in language which he cannot mis-construe or mistake, that—“ The JUSTIFICATION of a SINNER has NO CONNECTION WITH HIS OWN PERSONAL OBEDIENCE either to the MORAL or ceremonial *law*—in the act of his own justification, his *own performances are not taken into the account.*” *—Now if an avowed ATHEIST or a declared INFIDEL were to affirm that the declaration and doctrines contained in the New Testament were altogether false, and unfounded ; our ears would be shocked, and our reason alarmed—but they may be overturned and the reverse of them taught as the *true faith*, if the preacher do but assume with a tone of authority the title of EVANGELICAL—notwithstanding

* Sermons by the Rev. Ed. Cooper, p. 35.

apostles declare the Son of God to be “ the author of salvation to TO ALL THAT OBEY HIM.*” He may teach in direct opposition to it to all who transgress his commandments, that their justification has NO CONNECTION WITH THEIR OWN PERSONAL OBEDIENCE. And notwithstanding that the Saviour himself, striving to counteract the tendency of such a doctrine, addresses them most plainly and most solemnly thus : “ But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall *give an account* thereof in the day of judgment ; for by thy words thou shalt be *justified*, and by this word thou shalt be condemned.”—Yet shall the gospel preacher teach them in direct contradiction to this solemn assurance, that the justification of a sinner *has no connection with his obedience* to the moral will of God, and that in the act of his justification his *performances are not taken into the account !!!* Is it not in the nature of things that the morals of the middling and lower orders of the people should decline in proportion to their confidence in the new gospel preaching ? Is it not an event to be expected,

* Heb. 5. 9.

that their moral principles should in the end fall a sacrifice to their perpetual and unceasing instruction in tenets of *practical infidelity*? The daily increasing crowds of the ignorant and unenquiring which are gained over to the new school of faith, shew sufficiently how acceptable it is. What degree of injury may be accomplished before the imposture is fully detected, it is not easy to determine; how much longer and to what extent the moral good sense of the people is to be imposed upon, must depend upon the serious attention that the probable consequences excite in the public mind. Some among the wisest of our pious forefathers, saw the evil in the *beginning*—its *progress* we of this generation have to witness—and if it proceed much longer to spread as it has done—no very distant posterity will see *the end*.

It is enough, it seems, that all the disorderly classes of mankind, prompted as they are by their worst of passions to trample on the public welfare, should *know* that they are what every one else is convinced they are, the pests of society, and the evil is remedied. They are not to be exhorted to honesty, sobriety, or the observance of any laws, human or divine—they

must not even be entreated to do their best.—
 “Just as *absurd* would it be,” we are told, “in a physician to send away his patient when labouring under some desperate disease with a recommendation to do his utmost towards his own cure, and then to come to him to finish it, as it is in the minister of the *gospel* to propose to the sinner to *do his best*, by way of healing the disease of the soul—and then to come to the Lord Jesus to perfect his recovery. The *only* previous qualification is to *know* our misery, and the remedy is prepared.”—*

Out of pure humanity I would beg leave to caution every offender of whatever description he be against the sure consequences of *not doing his best* towards abstaining from the future commission of crimes, not only from the certainty of a judgment to come, but from the fear lest if the eye of the law should chance to detect his offences, he may then, when it is too late, *know his misery*, and find that the *remedy prepared* is a HALTER.

The libertine that has worn out the prime of his life in the haunts of prostitution, and who has destroyed his health, dissipated his property,

* See Dr. Hawker's Works, vol. 6. p. 127.

and lost his character, cannot fail to *know his misery*—there is not a night he goes to rest, but he will be put in full possession of this qualification, if that is the only thing required; but experience will teach him, what common sense will teach every one else, that the consciousness of disease, is something very distinct from the application of the remedy.

It is greatly to be wished since these evangelical preachers are so convinced of the *absurdity* of intreating the people *to do their best* towards amending their morals, and acquiring virtuous habits, that they would at least not strive to bring into neglect and contempt those preachers, who, animated by a regard for the moral welfare, of mankind; who may entreat them to improve their opportunities of doing good, and to approve themselves during the short and precarious period allotted them here below, to be faithful stewards of the talents entrusted to their care, and who may excite them so to do, by the assurance that the judge of all the earth will finally reward every well meant endeavour to promote virtue in others and to practice it ourselves.

Whatever these new evangelists may teach to the contrary, the present state of public morals, and of public happiness would assume a very different appearance, if the thieves, swindlers, and highway robbers would do *their best* towards maintaining themselves by honest labour, instead of perpetually planning new systems of fraud, and new schemes of depredation. However *absurd* they may conceive it to be, to exhort those who by private extravagance are rendering themselves insolvent, to retrench their expences, and *do their best* towards living within their incomes, the long list of bankruptcies, which to the disgrace of the national character are to be seen in every gazette, would be greatly curtailed, and our prisons would abound less in fraudulent debtors, and industrious tradesmen would not be—as too many of them are,—the prey of cheats, and the dupes of dishonesty.

I wish these triumphant High-Priests, who arrogate to themselves the exclusive praise of teaching the *gospel*, would walk abroad into the world and see the actual state and condition of

criminals in common life—that they would look every Sessions into the list of sins recorded in the Old Bailey calendar; it would be well-judged in them to do this before they teach men, that the gospel has NEITHER TERMS NOR CONDITIONS—that the idea of MORAL GOODNESS IS DONE AWAY—than that their future condition has no connection with their PERSONAL OBEDIENCE TO THE MORAL LAW—that all offenders are justified without their performances being taken into the account—and pronouncing it to be *absurd* to teach them to *do their best* towards fulfilling those duties which they were created to fulfil, and the transgression of which it is that occasions all those crimes and misdemeanors which pollute the community, and which leads so many to the gaol, and to the gibbet.

Let us revert back to that valuable work which has given the public so ample and exact a detail of the various crimes and misdeame-nors by which public and private property and security are at present injured and endangered.—Mr. Colquhoun in the course of the

remedies which he has so judiciously suggested towards their prevention, has the following remarks,—

“ To suffer the lower orders of people to be ill educated—to be totally inattentive to those wise regulations of state policy which might serve to guard and improve their MORALS; and then to punish them for crimes which have originated in bad habits, has the appearance of a cruelty not less severe than any which is exercised under the most despotic governments.

“ There are two circumstances which ought also to be minutely considered in apportioning the measure of punishment—*the immorality of the action; and its evil tendency.*

“ Nothing contributes in a greater degree to deprave the minds of the people, than the little regard which laws pay to MORALITY; by inflicting more severe punishments on offenders who commit, what may be termed *political crimes*, and crimes against property, than on those who violate religion and virtue.

“ When we are taught, for instance, by the measure of punishment that it is considered by the law as a greater crime to coin a sixpence

than to kill our father or mother, nature and reason revolt against the proposition.

“ In offences which are considered by the legislature as merely personal, and not in the class of public wrongs, the disproportionate punishment is extremely shocking.

“ If, for example, a personal assault is committed of the most cruel, aggravated, and violent nature, the offender is seldom punished in any other manner than by fine and imprisonment ; but if a delinquent steals from his neighbour secretly more than the value of twelve-pence, the law dooms him to death. And he can suffer no greater punishment (except the ignominy exercised on his dead body,) if he robs and murders a whole family. Some private wrongs of a flagrant nature are even passed over with impunity : the seduction of a married woman—the destruction of the peace and happiness of families, resulting from alienating a wife’s affections, and defiling her person, is not an offence punishable by the criminal law ; while it is death to rob a person, who has suffered this extensive injury, of a trifle exceeding a shilling.

“ The crime of adultery was punished with great severity both by the Grecian and Roman laws.—In England this offence is not to be found in the criminal code.—It may indeed be punished with fine and penance by the spiritual law ; or indirectly in the courts of common law, by an action for damages, at the suit of the party injured. The former may now (perhaps fortunately) be considered as a dead letter ; while the other remedy, being merely of a pecuniary nature, has little effect in restraining this species of delinquency.

“ Like unskilful artists, we seem to have begun at the wrong end ; since it is clear that the distinction, which has been made in the punishments between public and private crimes is subversive of the very foundation it would establish.

“ *Private offences* being the source of *public crimes*, the best method of guarding society against the latter is, to make proper provisions for checking the former.—A MAN OF PURE MORALS always makes the best subject of every state ; and few have suffered punishment as public delinquents, who have not long remained unpun-

nished as private offenders. The only means, therefore, of securing the peace of society, and of preventing more atrocious crimes, is to enforce by lesser punishment, the observance of RELIGIOUS AND MORAL DUTIES: without this, laws are but weak guardians either of the state, or the persons or property of the subject.

“The people are to the legislature what a child is to a parent:—As the first care of the latter is to teach the love of virtue, and a dread of punishment, so ought it to be the duty of the former, to frame laws with the immediate view TO THE GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OF MORALS.” *

We shall now proceed to see with what zeal the patriotic efforts of the public magistrate are opposed and counteracted by the *evangelic* efforts of the public preacher. After declaring as we have before heard, that—“*He* shall not recommend men to exert themselves in acts of *moral virtue* toward their own salvation: he goes on to tell the public, and the legislature, that they are to expect nothing from him or from the lower classes, so far as *he* can influence

* “Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis,” p. 34 Sixth Edition.

them towards promoting a regard for any laws which may be made for the general improvement of MORALS.—“While I am careful (says he) to follow the doctrine and liturgy of the church, in holding up the Lord Jesus Christ, as the *sole* saviour of *sinners*, I SHALL NEVER DIRECT the congregation to seek salvation *partly* by their *own works*, and partly by his.—For this is a mongrel religion unknown in scripture, in direct opposition as well to the law, as to the gospel, and literally disowned by both.”—*

If any work of reformation is to be promoted, not for the world will this pious evangelist permit his congregation to put their shoulders to the wheel, not for the world would he *act in such direct opposition to the law*, as to exhort bad men to comply with the rules of it.

Not for the revenues of an Arch-bishop would he exhort them to a duty *unknown in scripture*, in adding their five talents, to the five they have received,—never would he direct any follower of his so to act, as to have it in his power to say, when after a long time, the Lord cometh and reckoneth with him,—“Lord *thou hast delivered*

* Vide Dr. Hawker's Solemn Questions to Serious Christians.

unto me five talents, behold *I have gained five talents more.*”—Far be it from him to commend any personal diligence so strongly discommended, so *literally* disowned both by the law and gospel. Nothing should endure him to preach such a *mongrel religion*, as that which says well done thou *good and faithful* servant, to him who doubled the treasure committed to him by his own diligence, and thus *partly by his own works*, obtained the salvation announced to him in those approving words, “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Lest the growing immorality and increasing disregard of practical virtue, discernible in this crowded city, should not spread itself with sufficient rapidity, and lest in our villages some **MORAL** preacher should endeavour by earnest admonition, and fervent exhortation, to check the progress of vice, and produce in his hearers a regard for all those Christian virtues which constitute good works. It was found expedient to prepare a remedy for this sore evil, and accordingly one amongst the most popular of these new evangelists sends forth for the instruction of the rising generation of servants and labour-

ing poor in the different rural districts throughout the kingdom—his “Village Dialogues,” penned in that strain of vulgar quaintness, and low familiarity, which is so well fitted to the taste of those for whose edification they are intended.

The MORAL preacher of the established church who strives to inform the manners of the public, and to check the prevailing spirit of vice and dissipation,—who labours to reclaim society, from that extreme state of depravity to which it is fast arriving, and to keep alive, if possible, some veneration for the practice of *good* works, amidst the prodigious increase of *evil* works, the effects of which the laws are daily struggling, but struggling in vain, to remedy.—The parochial clergyman of this stamp is, in these Village Dialogues, held up to the sneer and ridicule of the country people, under the contemptuous appellation of—the REV. MR. DOLITTLE. Accordingly, when he attempts to teach the farmer and his family, who are made the parties to the dialogue, that faith *alone* is insufficient,—and that they must understand that good works are essential. The

farmer is made to reply in a style of low mockery,

“ Why then, sir, when I say I shall go *alone* to Mapleton-market next Thursday, you are to understand that I mean to take my wife and daughter Polly *with me*.—Is this the way in which I am to chop this *new-fashioned* logic ?” *

A further string of questions is then so framed, as to furnish the farmer and his family with a triumph over the *morality* of the Rev. Mr. Dolittle, and an opportunity of saying every thing in praise of Mr. LOVEGOOD, the *faithful* preacher. For this gentleman must have a *good name* to give his doctrines the victory.

Throughout the whole of these evangelical dialogues, intended for the use of the country people, in every farm and hamlet, and dispersed among them with equal zeal and success, all that respect and reverence, which all ranks among them were wont to feel towards the clergyman of their parish, or their village, whose sermons aimed at their *moral reformation*

* “ Village Dialogues, by Rowland Hill, A. M. vol. 1. p. 58.

is gradually diminished and done away. Those ministers of the living God, who had taught them to work out their own salvation, knowing they had the example and authority of Christ himself, as their warrant so to do, are now pointed at with a sneer, and nicknamed into derision by the profligate and vulgar:—Since, it seems, by the aid of the new evangelists, and the assistance of these dialogues, they soon discovered that “old Mr. DEADMAN, and his cousin Mr. BLINDMAN, had preached no more the *true doctrine* of the Bible, as it relates to salvation by Jesus Christ, than if they had been two of the priests of Jupiter.”*

Is it to be wondered at that the MORAL teachers of the *duties of Christianity* should be derided and despised by the lower orders throughout the different parts of the kingdom, when such language of derision and mockery is put into their mouths. The complaints of the profligacy of servants of every class, and of the depravity of the times are in every bodies hearing:—and these evangelical tutors—the dear Mr. Lovegood’s of the day,

* See “Village Dialogues,” vol. 1. p. 102.

deserve the best attention of the public for thus instructing the ignorant multitude—who are always ready enough to neglect their moral duties,—to despise and insult those by whom they are taught. It is well done in ROWLAND HILL to employ the buffoonery of an infidel, and the levity of a pantaloon, for the purpose of exposing to the sneer and ridicule of the common people, those teachers which the nation has appointed to protect its youth, and rear them to virtue. It must afford him great consolation amidst the increasing immorality, which shocks the feelings of our judges at every returning Assizes throughout the kingdom,—that HE has spared no pains to make the rising generation of ignorant and dissolute rustics laugh at what he terms the white-wash of *morality*;* that when their village curate exhorts them, if they have *faith* in the doctrine of a world to come, to add to it those good works in which the sum and substance of religion consists, he has led them to ridicule him, as *chopping a new-fashioned logic*.

* “Village Dialogues,” vol. 1. p. 59.

That class of preachers who strive to impress men with a due sense of the importance of attending most to those precepts of the gospel, which are practical and essential, and which lead all who obey them to holiness and purity, to honesty and sobriety, to charity and to justice, to devotion and piety, in a word which lead to *good works*, are stigmatized to the multitude with every sly calumny and indirect reproach, in order to multiply the converts to *their* gospel by thus alienating men from the moral preachers of Christianity. These Village Dialogues have throughout, this tendency; it is obviously their end and aim.—The different parties to them are as so many decoy-birds, taught so to sing to the praise of *their* preacher as may bring proselytes,—“I admire”—says one of them, by way of prefacing his departure from his former minister of the moral gospel,—“I admire that *your* minister takes such different texts to preach from, to what Mr. *Dulman* and such sort of ministers head their sermons with; and then when they have taken their text—we hear very little

more of the *Bible*, but only about some MORAL duty we ought to perform, and against *some evil practice* that people ought to avoid.”*—Thus the secret intimation is thrown out to the ignorant, that the *duties* of man with respect to God and his neighbour, make no part of the *Bible*, and they are invited over to enlist themselves among the followers of the gospel preacher, where their faith will not be MISLED by instruction to the *performance* of any MORAL DUTY, OR CORRUPTED by exhortation to *avoid* any EVIL *practice*.

When we behold the High-Priest himself thus taking part in those dialogues, in the assumed character of a new convert, in order through that means to win over others,—It reminds one too much of the similar practice of a recruiting serjeant, who, when he is beating up for volunteers, walks before the drum in the disguise of a new recruit to throw out a lure which may lead others to enlist.

It is in vain that the laws of the country strive to check the prevailing spirit of immorality ? It is in vain that thinking men, contemplating its

* “ Village Dialogues.”

dreadful effects and its rapid increase form themselves into a Society for its Suppression? It is in vain that the breakers of that moral law, which says thou shalt not steal, are launched into eternity, to deter others by their fate? In vain will all these operate to restore the criminal and profligate to the path of *moral* duty.—The evangelical priesthood pursue the extirpation of morality with a zeal and vehemence that must finally defeat all these efforts.

The moment they shall have succeeded in gaining possession of the popular mind, and have instilled into it the same rooted contempt for moral duty which they every where avow, the triumph over morality will be complete. For they know that the best mode of attack, is first to annihilate all respect for those that preach it, and to render them of no estimation in the eyes of the vulgar.—We shall see with what steadiness this evangelical union of its enemies carry on their warfare against it.

The popular tracts of the evangelical Dr. Hawker, declare to the multitude. that—“if he were to drop into a church of christians, and discovered that *moral* discourses were supply-

ing the place of evangelical truths he should be led to conclude, that he had mistaken his path and fallen into a synagogue of the Jews.”*—We have had a specimen of those *evangelical* truths, which are to annul the morality of the ten commandments.—The Doctor of the new Divinity, it seems, if he heard any one recommend from the pulpit of a Christian church, those principles of practical virtue which it was the express command of God that mankind should exemplify in their lives, if he heard him entreating his congregation to a faithful obedience to that *moral* law which God himself prescribed to mankind as their rule of conduct,—if any admonitions of this kind were given in an assembly of Christians.—The Doctor would not believe his ears.—The thing could not be possible in the church of England—He must have blundered with some blind guide into a SYNAGOGUE!—there is no other way for accounting for it.

The numerous hearers and readers of this alarmist will not fail to act upon his representation, and keep out of the way of the

* See his “Prop. against all Despair,” p. 8.

teachers of any thing so dangerous to the peace of mankind here, and their own peace hereafter, as the practice of *morality*.

Let us next remark what weapon another popular preacher employs to resist the introduction and destroy the influence of practical virtue. The preacher of the duties of Christianity—the better to degrade him in the opinion of the common people,—is represented under the flimsy name of TAPLASH, (for those who have to deal with the multitude know well that a name goes a great way,) his character is made to associate with it the idea of all that is offensive and absurd.—Then as to his sermons, “the ingredients of all his compositions,” (says this evangelic accuser,) “seemed to be nothing better than flimsy declamations and religious compliments—he would be talking of the *reward* we were to receive from the fair hand of our *virtuous conduct*.”—Thus the ignorant are taught in pretty plain terms and by a very plain inference that our SAVIOUR’S SERMON on the Mount was mere flimsy declamation,—“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for *their’s* is the kingdom of God. Blessed are the meek, for they shall

inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Thus said the Son of God,—and thus does he stand involved in the accusation—He too we see---for his words are before us,—He too would be talking of the *reward we were to receive* from the hand of our *virtuous conduct*. Thus is the Saviour himself held up to derision, who, as a MORAL PREACHER had no equal, but who if the new evangelical host can help it, shall have no imitators.

Well might our Saviour say, as he did, to this class of teachers who under the disguise of great outward sanctity, were secretly destroying the influence and undervaluing the importance of his *moral* example,—“Woe unto you, for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are NOT AWARE OF THEM.” *

Let us now attend them a little farther.

The faithful clergyman striving by his exhortation to reclaim mankind from vice, and

* Luke xi. 44.

contrasting the happy consequence of a virtuous life, with the distressful progress and fatal termination of a life of guilt, is further exposed to the sneer of the vulgar by the ridicule cast upon this discharge of his duty.—Mark the air and language of disdain with which moral virtue is consigned over to contempt in the person of its teacher. At one time,—says the revered Evangelist, addressing himself to the vulgar, and to that which always governs the vulgar their prejudices—“At one time after a very tasty specimen of his elocution in which he *had been displaying* the rich repast of *conscious virtue* brought home to the *pious mind*, he thus concluded, with the following line out of Thomson,

“Come then, expressive silence, muse her praise.”

“The orator stood all astonished at his own harangue, gave a very elegant *congee* to his auditory and then most gracefully sat down.”—

“In one of his *moral* harangues, descanting upon the *beauty of virtue* and *the excellence of a virtuous life*, he thus addressed his auditory in

a sentiment he had gathered from a *heathen* orator,"*—

Then follows an invocation to *virtue*, which the *heathen* orator is made to venerate, and which the *evangelical* orator strives to burlesque.—Tom Paine himself never laboured harder to root all virtue out of society,—Mandeville nor Voltaire never even laboured so much ;—they were content with declaring their disbelief of a future state, they did not disperse Dialogues among the poor and profligate to expose to ridicule those who should exhort them to make provision for it.

I confess it does not appear to me that any Jacobin from France could better contrive to make us the instrument of our own ruin, than by following up this system of private and public teaching ; let the intelligent reader judge whether the following language used by those writers, who early warned us against the consequence of French atheistical principles, does not apply equally to the consequences of English evangelical principles. Let him de-

* "Village Dialogues," vol. 3. p. 43.

termine whether what is here addressed to us, on the progress of Gallic infidelity does not equally refer to the opposition of this new sect of evangelists, to the cause of *virtue* and *morality*.—

“ While books instilling *sound principles* are frequently issued to the world with all the embellishments which result from the combined skill of the paper-maker, printer, hot-presser, and engraver, which of necessity confine their purchase to those who are least in want of their instructions, the poison which destroys them is almost invariably circulated in a cheap form which renders it easily attainable *by that description of persons on whom it is most likely to make the deepest impression, and whose mental infection is most prejudicial to the happiness and tranquility of the state.* This surely is an evil of magnitude, and calls loudly for the application of a speedy and effectual remedy.—In the present state of Europe, it is as much the duty of those who are entrusted with the government of states, to attend to the *press* as to the army or to the revenue. The call upon them is imperious; to evade it would be

treachery ; to resist it criminal. In other times when the acquisition of power between rival parties is the contention, government may, without danger silently contemplate the squabble, and remain passive and inert. But when the object of competition is the social and civilized world *with all its venerable train of religious DUTIES and MORAL feelings*, no individual can be neutral and virtuous, no government can be inactive, and innocent.”*—

Does not this new evangelical sect pursue the same end, and by the same means.—It is an impudent evasion to say, or their advocates for them, that they wish well to the cause of *virtue and morality*, while they are preaching it down in every bye street in London, and deprecating it in tracts and sermons circulated through the kingdom.

The leaders of this sect, like the atheistic leaders of France, begin by securing the common people, because they know that come

* See the prefatory advertisement to the Anti-Jacobin, p. 6.

what may, when that point is once gained, their cause must be victorious. When the populace shall be once brought to a conviction that the gospel, as they are told, has neither terms nor conditions,—no if's and but's; that the idea of moral goodness as essential to salvation, is done away;—*that no qualification, even of merit, is necessary for the attainment of future happiness in another life—that that attainment is not suspended on the performance of any duties whatever,—that it is procured for them by an eternal covenant, which no folly on their part can frustrate, nor any after-act destroy;—that no sins can be too great, no life too impure, no offences too many or too aggravated, to disqualify the perpetrators of them for salvation;—that the justification of those who have outraged every moral duty, has no connection with their future obedience.*—When this *evangelical system of faith* shall have gained a thorough possession of the popular mind, it requires no very extensive foresight to predict what will be the result.

Let us next advert to the nature of that

morality which we have just seen treated with mockery, and the discourses of the moral preacher whom the weak and the worthless are taught by every artful insinuation to shun as a *heathen orator*.

We shall be the better able to judge of that style of preaching which the gospel, and the necessity of the times, require to be exposed to the jeer of the rabble, and the scoff of the profligate.

“ In every age (says the MORAL Divine) the practice has prevailed of substituting certain appearances of piety in the place of the great *duties* of humanity and mercy: Too many there have always been, who flatter themselves with the hope of obtaining the friendship of their Creator, though they neglect to *do justice to their fellow creatures*. But such persons may be assured that *their supposed piety* is altogether of a spurious kind; it is an *invention of their own, unknown to reason, unknown in the word of God*. In scripture we are ever directed to try our faith *by our works*; our love of God, by our love of men.—We are directed to consider piety as a principle

which regenerates the heart, and forms it to goodness.—We are taught that *in vain* we address any homage to *Christ*, unless we do the things which he saith : and that love, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and temperance, are not only the *injunctions of his law*, but the native fruits of his spirit. If therefore, while PIETY seems ardent, MORALITY shall decline, you have full reason to believe that into that piety some corrupting ingredients have entered ; and if ever your regard to MORALITY shall totally fail, if, while you make many prayers, you give no alms ; if while you appear to be zealous for God, you are false or unjust to men, if you are hard or contracted in heart, severe in your censures, and oppressive in your conduct, then conclude with certainty, that what you had termed PIETY is no more than an empty name.—What you have called by that name, resolves itself into one or other of three things ; either it is a hypocritical form of godliness, assumed in order to impose upon the world ; or, which is the most favourable supposition, it is a transient impression of seri-

ousness, an accidental melting of the heart, which passes away like a morning cloud; or, which I am afraid is *too often the case*, it is the *deliberate refuge of a deluded and superstitious*, but, at the same time, a *corrupted mind*.”—Such is the recommendation of morality which this new sect of evangelists abhor; which they reprobate as the reverse of their gospel system. I have selected this specimen from BLAIR, because his sermons are not merely involved in the indiscriminate ridicule thrown upon all *moral harangues*, which are represented with a sneer as *descanting upon the beauties of virtue*, and the *excellencies of a virtuous life*, but they are marked by the new evangelists with a peculiar slur of contempt.—“Oh! my dear, (says one of the unconverted, in the Village Dialogues, in order to induce his wife to keep out of the crowd which attended the evangelical preacher)—Oh! my dear, I’ll stay at home with you, and read some of the Saturday’s papers of the Spectator; you know they are all upon *moral subjects*; or one of

Dr. Blair's Sermons, if Mr. Worthy has got them!!

To this Mrs. Lovely (for she must have an evangelical name) is made to reply,—“Indeed, my dear, I never could read either in those papers, or in Blair's Sermons, *any thing like so interesting* as what I have heard this day from Mr. Lovegood.”*—We cannot fail to remark here the insidious manner in which these admirable Sermons are classed, as it were negligently, with *those papers*, in order to impress every reader with a prejudice against them, as trifling and flimsy, and beneath the notice of the serious believer.

Having selected a specimen of moral preaching from one of its most distinguished advocates on the one side, it is but fair to select a specimen of evangelical preaching, from one of its most celebrated and popular champions on the other.

Let us take it then, from the favourite and admired Sermons of Mr. Toplady.

We will preface it with the solemn and

* Vide vol. 3. p. 94.

awful communication of the evangelist John, in order to shew how exactly they accord, how clearly the doctrines of the one are deduced from the revelation of the other, and how justly therefore, it assumes the exclusive title of EVANGELICAL.

“ And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written on the books, *according to the* WORKS.

“ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and Hell gave up the dead which were in them, and *they* were judged *every man according to his* WORKS.” *

Let us recall to mind at the same time, the urgent caution conveyed to us in the epistolary writings of Paul, given as an awful warning to the whole human race.—“ Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man *soweth that* shall he also *reap*.

And let us further add to the authority of

* Revelation, C. 20. v. 12, 13.

Revelation and of apostolic testimony, the confirmation and assurance of the Saviour himself.—“ When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory ;

“ And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats :

“ And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

“ Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world :

“ For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger and ye took me in ; naked and ye clothed me : I was sick and ye visited me : I was in prison and ye came to me.

“ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord when saw we *thee* an hungered, and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink ?

“ When saw we *thee* a stranger, and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee ?

“ Or when saw we *thee* sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ?

“ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have *done it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have *done it unto me*.

“ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.

“ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; I was a stranger and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick and in prison and ye visited me not.

“ Then shall *they also* answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we *thee* an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and *did not* minister unto thee.

“ Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye *did it not* to one of the least of *these*, ye *did it not* to *me*.

“And *these* shall go away into everlasting punishment, *but the righteous* into life eternal.” *—

Carrying all this in our mind, let us now attend to the *evangelical* preacher.

“The RELIGION of JESUS CHRIST stands eminently distinguished, and essentially differenced, from every other religion that was ever proposed to human reception, by *this remarkable peculiarity*, that, look abroad in the world, and you will find that every religion, *except ONE*, puts you upon DOING SOMETHING in order to recommend yourself to God. A MAHOMETAN expects to be saved by works; a PAPIST looks to be justified by his works; a free-willer hopes for salvation by his *works, compliances, endeavours, and perseverance*; a PAGAN, if he believes that there is a future state, expects to be happy hereafter by virtue of the supposed *good he does*, and of the evil he leaves undone; a MYSTIC has the same hope, and stands upon the same foundation. It is only the religion of Jesus Christ

* Mat. 6. 25.

that *runs counter* to all the rest, by affirming that we are *saved* and called with an holy calling, *not* according to our works, but according to the Father's own purpose and grace, which was *not* sold to us *on certain conditions to be fulfilled by ourselves*, but was given us in Christ before the world began." *

Now I would pause here and ask this plain question, is this the doctrine of the true gospel? or is it the doctrine of an avowed infidel?—If it is the doctrine of the *true gospel*, then the *New Testament* cannot be the *true gospel*, since what is just before quoted from it, teaches a doctrine so glaringly contradictory, that no language on earth can reconcile the one with the other.—If, on the other hand, the *New Testament* contains the true gospel, then is this the doctrine of one who cannot believe that gospel to be true, because he is most distinctly and directly at variance with it. He is therefore, let him come in what disguise he may—he is an INFIDEL.

* Toplady's Works; see his Sermon on James ii. 19.

Is there any man living so blind that he cannot, or so bigotted that he will not, see the tendency of all this, to pave the way for the most unqualified ATHEISM.

What do these evangelical preachers teach? —If such are to be our public instructors, and are to draw aside the people of England from all *moral* admonition, and to vilify it as fit only for an heathen orator, and worthy only of a Jewish synagogue, let us dissect their doctrine, that we may at least know what it is we are to learn, and what it is in which our faith is to consist.

Consulting one of their most distinguished leaders, whose works and doctrines are studied, quoted, copied, consulted, and incorporated into the sermons of all the sect, what are we taught?—

In the first place we learn that—"the religion of Christianity stands distinguished from all others by this remarkable peculiarity, that it is the only one that *does not put you upon doing something*, in order to recommend yourself to God."—Now the religion of Christianity, as delivered by the Saviour

himself to mankind, *has not* this remarkable peculiarity, but the reverse ; for it teaches, and in his own words, thus:—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should *do* to you, *do ye* even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets."—And when one came and said unto him,—“ Good master *what shall I do* that I may attain eternal life ? ”—He told him distinctly what he must do, and by what means he must attain it ; he answered—"If thou wilt enter life, keep the commandments." * —The gospel then which we have ever believed to contain the religion of the Christian world, has not that *remarkable peculiarity* by which alone the evangelical preacher tells us *it is to be known* ? According to his test, therefore, it must be rejected !!

“ The religion of Jesus Christ, (says the evangelical teacher of the people) runs counter to all others, by affirming that we are not saved on certain conditions to be fulfilled by ourselves.”—Now in that religion which the New Testament represents to us

* Mat. 19. ver. 16, 17.

as his, and which the Christian world have hitherto embraced as such, are these words: —“ Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in Heaven.” *

Now since we *are* here put upon fulfilling our duty in order to recommend ourselves to God, and since this gospel contains certain *conditions to be fulfilled by ourselves*, it follows, that it cannot contain the religion of Jesus Christ whose *remarkable peculiarity* it is, that it does not command the one, or prescribe the other.— Trying it, therefore, by the evangelical test, it must be rejected !!!

In the gospel of the New Testament, it is recorded that “ Jesus himself said to his disciples, ‘ The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man *according to his works.*’ ” † —But it is the MAHOMETAN that ex-

* Mat. 7. ver. 25.

† Mat. 16. ver. 27.

pects to be saved by his works.—It follows, therefore, according to the evangelical preacher, that the New Testament teaches the delusive faith of MAHOMET, and not the genuine religion of CHRIST.

In the gospel as transmitted to us by the four Evangelists. we are throughout expressly taught that “he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.”*—But it is the Free-willer, we are told, that *hopes for salvation* by his *compliances, endeavours, and perseverance*.—According, therefore, to the *evangelical* preacher, the four Evangelists do not teach the *religion of Jesus Christ*.—A Free-willer, it seems, may adopt their doctrine, but it will not be held by a *true believer*.

The sacred volume of Holy Writ declares that—“*true religion* and undefiled before God and the Father is THIS, to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” But to believe this, is to be a PAGAN,—“a

* Mat. 14. ver. 13.

Pagan if he believes that there is a future state, expects to be happy hereafter, *by virtue* of the supposed good *he does*, and *of the evil he leaves undone.*"

The religion of the New Testament, according to the evangelical preacher, is the religion of PAGANISM for the religion of the New Testament most earnestly puts us upon *doing something*, in order to recommend ourselves to God, its language is "This do, and thou shalt live;" it therefore has not that *distinguishing peculiarity* which according to him exclusively denotes the religion of Christ,—and it sets forth conditions to be performed by ourselves, which *that religion* we are told does not.—It follows therefore that the religion of the New Testament is not the true religion of Jesus Christ.

Such is the clear inference from the evangelical doctrines! The result is not circuitous but direct,—it is the conclusion to which every mind must be led that is capable of thinking, and is qualified to examine or reflect at all. Can we wonder

then if infidelity increase under such instructors?—While we are spending our strength and draining our resources to resist that mighty combination framed against the religion of Christianity FROM ABROAD, it may not be wholly useless to open our eyes to what is going forward AT HOME.

We must not judge of men by their professions, but by their actual efforts.—We must not judge of them by any sounding name they may appropriate to themselves, for that is assumed for the purpose of obtaining a favourable first impression, and throwing the judgment of mankind off its guard. Whoever weakens in society, the veneration for morality is a traitor to his country; and whoever diminishes the influence of religion in the world as a rule of daily conduct, is a traitor to his God.—And it is not the disguise of an evangelist that should screen him from shame or shelter him from indignation;—it is a cloak that has been worn threadbare in the service of bigotry and impositor.—It is high time that some efforts

should be made to rescue ourselves from the abuses that are practised under it. *

When we remark the odium cast on the moral ministers of the established church by this new spiritual power, and the consequent diffusion of the same hostile

* There is perhaps, no public writer to whose labours, in the cause of moral virtue, the public are more indebted than to Mr. Paley. There is no one whose writings are better calculated to do good, by inculcating the essential duties of common life, and the sound truths of practical christianity. But in order to suppress their circulation, on account of the stress they lay upon the fulfilment of the duties of Christian morality, an evangelical libeller ranks him in the list of infidels, that his readers may be deterred from the perusal of his works.—“ Though no man (we are told) has written better respecting the authenticity of revelation, yet few have gone so far in giving up many of the divine truths therein contained.”† —And what proof is brought to substantiate so serious a charge? None! I know not what sort of character such libellers contrive to obtain in the world, but sure I am that they deserve the hiss of every honest and manly mind.

† Village Dialogues, by Rowland Hill, vol. 2. p. 117. FOURTH EDITION.

spirit among the prodigious body of their followers,—we cannot fail to call to mind, that among the pre-disposing causes of the French Revolution was the state of public opinion respecting the national clergy—that the unpopularity artfully brought on them by persons who sought their degradation, was the prelude to their downfall.—The multitude whose prejudices had been secretly excited against them, made no scruple to tear them from that station, of which they had long been taught to look upon them as unworthy. The passions of contempt, hatred and revenge were let loose, and the mob became the willing and eager instruments of the removal of an order of persons whom they had long before been made to despise.

Their depravity, and their unfitness for their high and sacred function were the pretexts. The event in which all this defamation ended is under our eye. The national clergy fell under the load of obloquy cast upon them—and with them fell that *moral* order of society which it had so long been

the aim of their opponents to overturn. That this was the active and efficient cause may be collected from the reasons urged by Mr. BURKE in their defence.—“Undoubtedly”—says this strenuous supporter of moral freedom and moral government,—“Undoubtedly the natural progress of the passions from frailty to vice, ought to be prevented with a watchful eye, and a firm hand. But is it true that the body of your clergy had passed those limits of a just allowance? From the general style of your publications of all sorts, one would be led to believe that your clergy in France were a sort of monsters:—an horrible composition of superstition, ignorance, sloth, fraud, avarice, and tyranny.

“When my occasions took me into France, towards the close of the late reign, the clergy under all their forms engaged a considerable part of my curiosity. So far from finding (except from one set of men not then very numerous though very active,) the complaint and discontents against that body, which some publications had given me rea-

son to expect, I perceived little or no public or private uneasiness on their account. On further examination I found the clergy, in general persons of moderate minds and decorous manners ;—I had not the good fortune to know a great many of the parochial clergy, but in general I received a perfectly good account of their morals, and of their attention to their duties.—With some of the higher clergy I had a personal acquaintance, and of the rest in that class very good means of information.—They seemed to me beyond the clerical character, liberal and open, with the hearts of gentlemen and men of honour ; neither insolent nor servile in their manners and conduct. They seemed to me rather a superior class, a set of men, amongst whom you would not be surprised to find a *Fenelon*.—I saw among the clergy of Paris (many of the description are not to be met with any where) men of great learning and candour ; and I had reason to believe that this description was not confined to Paris. What I found in other places I

know was accidental ; and therefore to be presumed a fair sample. I spent a few days in a provincial town, where in the absence of the bishop, I passed my evenings with three clergymen, his vicar's-general, persons who would have done honour to any church: They were all well informed: two of them of deep, general, and extensive erudition, ancient and modern, oriental and western; particularly in their own profession. They had a more extensive knowledge of our English divines than I expected, and they entered into the genius of those writers with a critical accuracy. One of these gentlemen is since dead the Abbe Moranges,—I pay this tribute without reluctance, to the memory of that noble, reverend, learned, and excellent person, and I should do the same with equal cheerfulness, to the merits of the others, who, I believe are still living, if I did not fear to hurt those whom I am unable to serve.

“Some of these ecclesiastics of rank, are, by all titles, persons deserving of general respect—they are deserving of gratitude from

me, and from many English. If this letter should ever come into their hands, I hope they will believe that there are those of our nation who feel for their unmerited fall, and for the cruel confiscation of their fortunes with no common sensibility. What I say of them is a testimony, as far as one feeble voice can go, which I owe to truth. Whenever the question of unnatural persecution is concerned I will pay it. No one shall prevent me from being just and grateful. **THE TIME IS FITTED FOR THE DUTY**; and it is particularly becoming to shew our justice and gratitude when those who have deserved well of us and of mankind, are labouring under popular obloquy.”*—

The same popular obloquy which thus secretly paved the way for the destruction of the national clergy of France, is with us, daily forwarding the same aims, and proceeding to the same ends. It is working at present underground; but it is not working unseen by those whose eyes are open, nor unfelt by those against whom its preparations are directed.

* Burke's Letters on the French Revolution, p. 314.

The evangelical dissenting ministry who thus hold up the *moral* clergy of the church as grossly abusing their trust, by perverting that *gospel* which they were chosen to preach, when they are not only exposed to the multitude as indifferent to their own eternal concerns, but as drawing *them* aside from the truth ;—when this body of opponents, announcing themselves to be the faithful teachers of that gospel which the church is represented as ignorantly and impiously setting at nought—when this body has by degrees gained such an accession of strength and influence from the prodigious increase of its followers as to have become a NEW SPIRITUAL POWER in the State,—and when this power is daily increasing its ascendancy over, and multiplying its adherents from that class of persons which must ever make up the mass of every nation, and in which mass the physical power of the nation itself must ever reside—when this new power manifesting a zeal commensurate with its purpose, inspires the same zeal into its proselytes, and those proselytes are taken from among

those whose passions are always strong because their reason is weak, and in whom therefore the workings of fanaticism are always the most extravagant and the most to be feared.—In this state of things, is not the Christian religion here, as in France, in danger of abolition amongst us, from the powerful but disguised hostility thus speciously employed against it?—Abolish the *moral law*, which this new power thus slight and abuse, and what have we left. Take away the *moral* commandments of God from his gospel, and you have lain the axe to the root;—its essence, its vitality is gone.—Take away the restraint of its *moral* precepts from religion, and you abolish it to all intents as effectually as it ever was abolished in France in the most frantic period of the Revolution, and you let loose upon society all the vices and all the crimes which that country exhibited when those *moral* restraints were disregarded and despised—Can any man then that wishes well to his country look with unconcern on the establishment of this NEW POWER; can any man that ve-

nerates religion, and feels its value in society, carelessly see its practical influence systematically opposed, and the ministers of christian MORALITY given over to mockery and scorn by that rival authority, thus risen up to supplant them.

These men lifted up in their ignorance, and muddled with the fumes of their own VANITY, proclaim their interpretations of the sacred text to be such alone as should be adopted : As if the Bible had no meaning till they came to explain it,—as if no one had sense to examine or decide for himself, but must resort to *them* as ‘stewards of the mysteries.’—Common sense is to be cast aside, and reason trampled under foot, to make way for *their* dictates, and to give place to *their* decision.—But is it not surprising that their emptiness is not discovered?—Not at all—their followers are not competent to discover it. Look at the crowds which flock round impostors of every kind. Can the ignorant detect the ignorant? No. But men of skill will descompound the poisonous

mixture, which the deluded victim of quackery swallows as an infallible cure.

Eventually the whole direction of the popular mind in the affairs of religion will be gained into the hands of a set of ignorant fanatics of such low origin and vulgar habits, as can only serve to degrade religion in the eyes of those to whom its influence is most wanted.—Will such persons venerate or respect it in the hands of a sect composed in the far greater part of bigotted, coarse, illiterate, and low-bred enthusiasts. Men who have abandoned their lawful callings in which, by industry, they might have been useful members of society, to take upon themselves concerns the most sacred, with which nothing but their vanity and their ignorance could have excited them to meddle.—

The doctrine of these directors of the new Divinity is calculated to repress, as much as possible, all personal virtue.—Every page of the gospel is perverted from its true meaning, in order to make it subservient to this purpose;—they throw the imputation of pride upon what they term the *self-righteousness* of all

those who strive to attain salvation by personal goodness. They never fail to refer to the proud Pharisee whom they term *self-righteous*, and then having grossly misrepresented his character, they proceed to declaim on the arrogance of founding any expectation of reward from the performance of our *moral duties*.—Whereas the plain truth is, that the Pharisee was *not righteous*, but merely arrogated to himself that character, he had neglected all the moral duties of life, and the weightier matters of the law, and fancied that because he abstained from those most flagrant crimes which he had no temptation to commit,—had fasted twice in the week, and paid tithes of all that he possessed, (where others only paid tithes of the smaller herbs of mint and rue,) that he had a strong and superior claim to reward.—The moral truth which our Saviour meant to convey by this parable is obviously this,—that the sinner who is humbled with a sense of his past offences, is more likely to repent and obtain salvation than the ostentatious bigot who, while he neglects the essential *duties* of christianity,

believes because he makes long prayers, hears sermons twice in a week, and is strict in the outward ceremonials of devotion, that therefore he stands in no need of repentance, but is already among the number of the elect.

To what class of persons does the gospel tell us this parable was spoken? to the truly righteous who trusted in their own good works for acceptance? No such thing,—take the words of the gospel itself—“And he spake this parable unto certain which *trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others?*”—But if a fool prides himself in his *ignorance*, would any one speak of him as being proud of his *understanding*. Is true wisdom to be abused and undervalued, because the vanity of a blockhead leads him to *trust in himself* that he is *wise*? Is a lecture to the one to be turned into a libel on the other?

Yet such is the barefaced distortion of truth practised for the mere purpose of bringing *morality* into contempt. The utility of this instructive parable, is wholly destroyed

by their most shameful perversion of it, to the purpose of depreciating the value of that *practical* goodness which it was meant to exalt, and of the efficacy of that personal virtue which it was its sole design to enforce. To this end, that which is nothing more than *self-delusion*, in the Pharisee, is termed *self-righteousness*; and from thence the occasion is taken to defame all those who strive to prepare themselves during this their state of trial for that judgment which they must undergo at that day when they will receive either reward or punishment according as they shall be found to have *merited* the one, or *deserved* the other.

They rob the upright of their confidence in Heaven, by teaching them that no good works or virtuous actions can attain it. All the promises which God of his infinite goodness has given to man to excite him to perseverance in well doing, are *in fact* denied, and *in effect* frustrated by a swarm of new evangelists who are every where teaching the people,—that no reliance is to be placed on holiness of life as a

ground of future acceptance!!—Who are these men I would ask, that thus strive to root out of the belief of the merciful that they shall obtain mercy, and of the *pure in heart* that they shall see God?!! Who are these men that thus dare annul the promises of Heaven to the righteous, by declaring that righteousness to be no ground of dependance?—Where is their warrant for this their ignorant presumption; is it to their insulting pretensions to the title of evangelical teachers, that the voice of reason, and the word of God is to be silenced?

When the man to whom *five* talents were given, produced *ten* when he was called to account, did the Lord revile his *self-dependance* or reward his hopes?—When the steward of *one* talent produced what he had received, did he praise his *faith* or punish his *folly*?—Let the new gospel interpreters answer this plainly, and without equivocation.—Let them first understand that gospel they affect exclusively to teach, and not fancy themselves doing the work of evangelists, while they

are splitting the texts of truth to patch up the doctrines of error.

There is no virtue which these preachers do not reprobate in the exercise, in order to sink its worth and value in the estimation of mankind!—There is no example which the Bible holds forth for our instruction or imitation, but they strive to annul its efficacy by denying its *merit*; nay, the very conduct which they allow to be *virtuous*, they, in the very same breath, denounce as *criminal*.—Take one among ten thousand examples that might be offered.—“There was a man in the land of Uz (says the Scripture) whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”—What comment does the evangelical preacher make upon this? what construction does he put upon it so as to discourage others from the imitation of such a character? “There is no doubt (says he) of the integrity and uprightness of Job, but while he was righteous, he was self-righteous, and this was his crime.”*—What blasphemous jargon is

* Village Dialogues, by Rowland Hill, vol. 8. p. 104. 4th Ed.

this, which admits the *integrity* and the *uprightness* of the character alluded to, and at the same time denounces this personal righteousness as CRIMINAL.—I can use no language which would sufficiently stigmatise so gross and glaring an attempt to root out of the popular mind all respect for the practice of *virtue*, by attaching to it the imputation of *guilt*.

That *self-murder* is a sin we know, but it was left for the new theory of religion to teach the guilt of *self-righteousness*.

Where do we find it affirmed that the *righteousness* of Job was *criminal*? What authority is quoted to support a language so stupidly contradictory?—What a contemptible opinion must such writers entertain of the British public, before they can venture to dictate to it in such a strain of unmeaning gibberish; no man that did not count upon finding in every reader a greater fool than himself, could risk the publication of such impious trash.

Are the faithful followers of that Saviour who suffered, leaving us an *example* that we

might follow his steps, to be libelled as proud and self-righteous, instead of being animated to perseverance by the encouraging assurance which he has himself given that—"he that endureth to the end shall be saved."—Is the upright man who rests on the promise of God to reward every one according to his *works*, to be taught that he is resting on a broken reed?—This he most certainly is, if the evangelical doctrine be true, that these *works* are not to be relied on as a ground of future acceptance.

What, after all, is the meaning of this term *self-righteous*, which is canted about from mouth to mouth, and from sermon to sermon, with such a tone of bitter condemnation? Do those who adopt it one after another, pause to enquire what they mean by it?—Does not righteousness consist in the practice of those duties which the gospel enjoins, and abstaining from those crimes which the gospel condemns? If so, must not each individual *himself* practise that which is right, and refrain from that which is wrong?—Can *another* tell truth *for* a liar, or be honest *for* a housebreaker?

—Can the licentious be pure *by substitute* or the profane be devout *by deputy*?—Can another be upright *for* the swindler, or chaste *for* the seducer?—Must not every bad man leave off *his own* evil courses, and must he not *himself* repent and reform?—Is it not expressly declared that it is “*he that doeth righteousness, that is righteous*?”

Since then it is plain that each must *himself* be righteous if he be so at all, what do they mean who thus inveigh against *self-righteousness*, since Christ himself declares there is no other.

Are we in the day of judgment to be tried each according to what he hath *himself* done, whether it be good or evil, or are we to be tried according to what *another* hath done?—When Christ shall come to judge the earth, will he call us to answer for *our own* deeds, or will he not?—If he will, how heavily must they answer at the bar of God, who by depreciating the merit of personal goodness, discourage the truly virtuous, and daily draw aside many from that path which can alone lead them to Heaven.

“CRIMES of every description (says Mr. Colquhoun) have their *origin* in the vicious and immoral habits of the people; in the little attention paid to the *education* of the *inferior orders*; and in the want of some plan for regulating the MORALS of this useful class of the community.”*—How then must crimes of every description increase, if, instead of a plan for the regulation of their morals, we have a system fitted for their further destruction, and if instead of being early educated to those habits of practical integrity, devotion, and purity of heart and life, which in scripture language is termed “righteousness,” they are to be educated into a thorough contempt of those habits, as of no *merit* or estimation, and brought up in the belief that this righteousness is a thing so vile as only fit to be compared to whatever is most worthless.

Lest the *Village Dialogues* before noticed, should not bring the heathen attribute of *virtue* sufficiently into dis-countenance, another evangelical minister forwards the labour by the aid of *Village Sermons*.—It is needful that the different districts of this kingdom,

* Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis, p. 32.

should be well supplied lest a respect for the laws of morality should gain ground, and the cottager should bring his children up in the notion that it was *meritorious* to observe them.

Notwithstanding the earnest efforts of the gospel to guard the youthful mind against the deception too often practised upon it by impostors in the disguise of Saints; yet are those efforts defeated by the daring audacity with which they are opposed.—

“And to her,” says the SCRIPTURE, “was yet granted that she should be arrayed in FINE LINEN, CLEAN and WHITE, for the FINE LINEN is the RIGHTEOUSNESS of saints.”—What say the VILLAGE SERMONS,—“My dear children, why do you hope to go to Heaven! Is it because you are not as bad as others; because you say your prayers, and go to church or meeting? If so, you are proud: proud of your own RIGHTEOUSNESS, which the SCRIPTURE calls FILTHY RAGS.”*—There’s an EVANGELICAL Priest for you!!!

* “Village Sermons,” intended for the use of families, Sunday schools, and companies assembled for religious

This evangelical instructor of VILLAGES, answers all questions with great readiness.—
 “Are you not asking—(says he) wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and appear before the Most High God? You have now heard. *Not by works of righteousness which you have done*,—these are imperfect and insufficient—The best of them is mixed with sin.—*Trust not in them.*”^{*}—This is indeed spoken in a tone of authority. But “BE NOT DECEIVED,” says our *Saviour*,” *he, that doeth righteousness, IS RIGHTEOUS.*—

I am only anxious that the Country should have some well authenticated examples of what those doctrines are, which are imposed upon the weak and ignorant; and dignified with that pompous title which we find annexed to them. I am only desirous that these doctrines should stand out fairly to the light—should be turned round and inspected.—If the new faith be the only true one let us embrace it; but

instruction in country villages, in four volumes, by George Burder. See Sermon 13th, vol. 2. SEVENTH Edition.

* Ibid.

let not those who vend these *new articles*, expect that we should choose them with our eyes shut.

Those who know the actual state of the morals of the lower classes in the different hamlets and villages, can alone judge of the pernicious and destructive effects which arise to society from the propagation of principles so adverse to their reformation. Every country magistrate throughout the kingdom has daily occasion to lament the increase of depredations committed not only on the farmer, but on property of every discription in their respective neighbourhoods. It is equally the duty and interest of every man to give effect to the utmost of his means, to the exertions of the magistrates to suppress them. But let any person ask himself whether he thinks the amendment of these offenders,—if in an hour of remorse their conscience should send them to seek instruction,—is to be effected by such an address as the following:—

“ You must *despair* of obtaining salvation by your works,—your SORROW FOR SIN, OR

YOUR FUTURE AMENDMENT—And this *will make the gospel welcome to you.*”*—Can any man that is not crazy, sit down deliberately and pen such discourses for the press?—Can any man calling himself a Minister, and professing to teach the doctrines of that great founder of our religion, who died, that by his teaching and his example he might save his people *from* their sins, impiously assure every class of offenders, that they cannot come to him too heavily laden with crimes and offences, and that it is foolishness to think of mending their lives by way of preparing themselves to appear before him.—“Abstain from all appearance of evil,” is the injunction of Paul.—“Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect,” is the exhortation of our Saviour himself, to those who came to him, and by him directed to be enforced wherever his gospel is preached. Can we turn with patience—can we even turn without a mixture of disgust and horror to

* Burder's Village Sermons, Seventh Edition. Sermon III. p. 25.

the impious reverse of all this delivered to the ignorant multitude in the coarsest language which vulgar fanaticism can furnish.—“This man”—says this Village Reformer,—“receiveth sinners, he came on purpose, to save them and bids you come that he may save you. Think not *foolishly* first to *mend* yourselves and then come to him; you will never be better till you do come,

Come needy, come GUILTY, come loathsome and bare,
YOU CAN'T COME TOO FILTHY, come just as you are.”*

Is it not insufferable that a man should dignify this trumpery with the title of SERMONS? Is it not lamentable that such discourses and such doctrines should find their way to the hand of the credulous people in all quarters of the country, and that Sermons of this stamp should pass through numerous Editions, to the utter exclusion of every work by which the sound principles of religion might be diffused, and society be rescued from the dominion of those errors by which it is misled, and those crimes by which it is corrupted?

* BURDER'S VILLAGE SERMONS. Vol. I. Ser. XX. Seventh Edition.

What says the parable of our Saviour, and how does it correspond with the language quoted above?—"And when the King came in to see his guests, he saw there a man that had not on a *wedding garment*.

"And he saith unto him, Friend how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? *And he was speechless.*

"Then said the King to the servant, bind him, hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*—Can we forbear to contrast this with the doctrine taught and the invitation given in direct defiance of it. Yet these evangelists spare no efforts to spread their principles, and they denounce as infidels all who do not acknowledge *them* to be the preachers of the true *gospel faith*.

If any work appears which bears about it the tone and colouring of *their* opinions, or contains even a remote and indirect approbation of them, it is admitted into their

* Matt. 22.

circle. If it is an avowed defence of their doctrines, the writer is extolled with the utmost ardour, and his work procured with the utmost eagerness; and though its admiring readers should be wholly unable to understand it, yet if it descant on the usual mysteries and produce the usual texts, all agree to applaud it as truly evangelical, for this term *evangelical* is employed to sum up all merit and perfection in a single word, and is well calculated to conceal the ignorance of those who wish to be thought judges; it is something like the term *nervous* in physic, it serves to describe every ailment which the doctor does not understand.—If on the other hand any work is given to the public which examines and exposes their opinions, the writer is instantly denounced as an unbeliever, no calumny is spared that can repress its circulation; the closer and more convincing the arguments, the more are they reprobated as specious and delusive; for REASON when applied to refute *their* errors is always most *carnal* when it is most *conclusive*.

The labours of the most learned are treated by them with supercilious contempt. They speak of what they are pleased to term 'the pride of human learning,' with all that disdain which marks the pride of human ignorance. They contrive to convert their disgrace into their glory, and turn that imbecility which should be their shame into their consolation. The man who by a course of long and arduous study has qualified himself for the labours of his most high and awful calling; that man is classed, with a sneer among the worldly wise; the treasures of divine grace are not for him—he has no interest in the true inheritance.—No. These genuine descendants of Popery acknowledge no true title but in *the Pretender*.

It is impossible not to remark with what dogmatical assurance they affirm or deny in matters of faith; and how industriously they strive by mutual puffing and quotation to give weight and circulation to their own opinions. Instead of defending their assertions by argument, or supporting them by

reason, they quote others of the same sect who hold the same doctrines, and thus the unthinking are deceived into a reception of them. But others there are who well know that *mere authority* in such case is but *assertion repeated*; that we must not attend to what men *say* but to what they *prove*, and that a blockhead does not demonstrate his opinion to be true, by merely producing the testimony of other blockheads in support of it.

Every publication in which morality is supported against the destructive influence of their doctrines is studiously kept from the sight of their disciples. This can only be done by representing them as containing the worst poison of infidelity, and to this mode therefore they have recourse. They have not an authority to suppress the periodical REVIEWS, but they have a power by evangelical anathema to interdict the perusal of them, and this power they do not fail to exert; no mode of attack is left untried,—sometimes they are to be treated as utterly beneath regard.—“What,” says one of the

evangelists at the Alexandrine close of his labours,—“What will that terrible phalanx, the REVIEWERS say?—Oh that matter is easily settled, they, like wise men of Gotham, tell the word, even by the title-page of their books, under whose service *they* have registered their brains and pens: the reader who minds them, (I speak of them as a body) proves he has no mind of his own.”*—

At other times a more terrific warfare must be made, and the crime and danger of perusing them is then arrayed in all its horrors,—“When asked,” says another, lamentingly alluding to some of his flock,—“why they do not visit the theatres, they tell us, that they disapprove of the actors, and that it is a sin to minister to the support of such an infamous profession. But it is the constant practice of these very persons to take in magazines, or periodical REVIEWS, the writers of which, from behind the ambush of literature, scatter abroad principles of scepticism and infidelity.”†—

* Rowland Hill's Village Dialogues, V. 4. p. 175.

† SERMONS ‘On the Danger of reading improper

These pious pontiffs never condescend to prove their assertions. They deal out their

Books,' preached at the monthly association. Oct. 8. 1807. By the Rev. John Clayton jun. This evangelical preceptor, has affixed a list of Books, to which he is pleased to give the important sanction of his approbation. But he has omitted one of great utility, and which he might himself consult with advantage—AN ENGLISH GRAMMAR. If his Sermon should reach a Second Edition, he will himself do well to *review* the passage cited above. To talk of scattering abroad *principles from behind an ambush*, is to jumble literal with metaphorical expression in a manner that one should hope even a school-boy would have avoided.

His review might be extended to many passages of this discourse which require to be lowered to a tone of more becoming humility; for example,—“I must beg leave to say a few words to tutors and governesses: to you is committed a serious charge, the formation of character. Much depends on the books read in your schools. *Apply our previous directions* to their choice.” p. 36.

It were well if those who rail so vehemently against *self-righteousness*, would substitute less of *self-conceit* in the place of it.

Some passages deserve his more serious *review*, among others, that in which he enjoins those who have erred *during the day*,—“to close their engagements by penitentially *casting their guilt on their compassionate Saviour*.” Pag. 30.—He has no warrant from Scripture to authorize such conduct, nor can he produce a single passage from the gospel which would justify such advice. On the contrary, there is no lesson that can more completely confound the moral judgment or destroy the moral principle, than that which teaches an offender of whatever de-

condemnation with the air of persons who can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is

scription to *cast his guilt upon the innocent*. The gospel never intended to initiate mankind in a practice so repugnant to every feeling of justice, and so hostile to every dictate of truth.

Mr. Clayton informs the Christian world,—that “a large library may be composed of those works alone, in which there is nothing objectionable or deleterious.”—This may be true, but whether the Booksellers of this kingdom can furnish such a happy collection, seems matter of doubt; it should appear *not* by his sending us to fetch our materials so far a field.—“Christians,”—says this great divine, “You are under no necessity to seek materials from the heathenish TYRIANS, for the erection of your glorious temple of knowledge, there are enough in *the land of ISRAEL, and the precincts of JERUSALEM.*” (Pag. 24.)

The catalogue of Authors which this reverend gentleman has pleased thus publicly to specify and recommend, begins with Homer, Hesiod, the Argonautica, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Pindar, Theognis, Horodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, &c. To these Greek writers are added a list of Latin poets, Historians and Orators, and these again are followed by a long roll of English writers, moral, historical, theological, political, and poetical, to the number of about one hundred. And as this catalogue of writers, *Greek, Roman, and English*, is to go forth to the learned world, with the consecrative seal of Mr. Clayton to their respective merits, it becomes necessary to proceed in the affair with due caution.—“This catalogue,”—says he, with a gravity becoming the great occasion,—“might be considerably extended but I study *brevity*. It is only *necessary for ME to add*, that the recommendation of these books, is *not to be considered as*

curious to observe the tone of authority with which they send forth their excommunication into the commonwealth of literature. They never condescend to produce any evidence to testify that their invectives are not wholly without foundation ; they are so accustomed to make *their own*, the measure of every other man's *faith* ; and they meet with such entire acquiescence in the circle of their own followers, that they seem to claim a prescriptive right to libel all who hold an opinion opposite to their own. These evangelical DISSENTERS exercise, as by charter, a right to differ from others in matters of faith, and to abuse and vilify all that *differ from them*.

There is one striking circumstance that expressive of MY *approbation*, of every particular sentiment they contain."

It would indeed be a grievous injustice if this writer's reputation should be injured by the occasional unsoundness of opinion in writers, whom it is more than probable he may never have read, and for whose sentiments he ought no more to be made answerable than the compiler of Lackington's catalogue, from which it is not unlikely that his own was abridged.

demands peculiar remark. These high-strained pretenders to godliness, who deny the power of the sinner to help himself, take good care always to attribute his *saving change*, to the blessed effect of some sermon preached by some one or other of *their* evangelical fraternity. They always hold *themselves* up to the multitude as the instruments of producing all those marvellous conversions which they relate. No instance is recorded in their Saint's calendar, of any sinner resolving in consequence of a reflective and serious perusal of the Scriptures to lead a new life. No instance of a daily perusal of the Bible producing a daily progress in virtuous habits.—No, the *gospel* has no such effect.—It is always the *gospel preacher*, who works the miracle; it was some text which he preached from, that first struck out the spark of evangelical faith.—The Grace of God may produce all *moral* reformation, for that is progressive and gradual, but GOD THE PRIEST must stand foremost in all the great works of *instaneous conversion*, and at the feast of praise must

come in for his full share from the crowd of the faithful.—

“ Joy to the Master of the feast,
His name our souls for ever bless,
To God the King, *and God the Priest*
A loud Hosannah round the place.”*

They place their own interpretations of the Scripture doctrines on the same level of authority with the Scripture itself,—and who-soever does not subscribe to them, must expect a plentiful sprinkling of abuse from the shower-bath of Calvinism ; the terms infidel, heathen, socinian, deist, atheist, with all the abusive epithets which their evangelic spleen can furnish, will be vented against him. For this order of believers do not seem to conceive the rules of christian candour, or of common justice, to be binding upon them. They never think it necessary to produce evidence to substantiate their charges. With them assertion supplies the place of authority ; for it is with their libels, as with their doc-

* Watt's Hymns, b. 3. h. 18.

trines, they consider *proof* as destroying the very essence of *faith*.

After all, in what does the grievous crime of reading *REVIEWS* consist?—The material mischief is hinted pretty broadly, by this faithful Remonstrant, who declares that he will undertake to prove that some religious professors, have for years, by taking in these and other evil works, “ contributed twice as much to the spread of ruinous opinions, *as to the support of their evangelical minister*, who labours to instruct them in the things which make for their peace,”*—

Such a delicate hint so publicly sent forth to the world, stamps a *real dignity* on the character of the Minister. It marks that honourable feeling of independence which draws a line of separation between such minds, and those of a *mean and mercenary* cast. It is to be hoped that the faithful will relieve themselves for the future from the reproach thus thrown out against them, and

* Sermon by the Rev. John Clayton jun. “ On the danger, &c. p. 18.

not expose themselves to the lash of such home-felt provocation. We trust that hereafter the fruits of their faith will more and more abound in the pocket of their evangelical directors, that they may say, with increased joy, that in godliness there is *great gain*.

But these Saints, who would stop their ears if you should mention with admiration the name of a Garrick, or a Siddons ;—who think it a sin to support such an *infamous profession* as that through the medium of which a Milton, a Johnson, an Addison, and a Young, have laboured to mend the heart. These Saints, who if you were to take their own word for it, are really too good for the world they live in ; how does their evangelical pastor find their holy leisure occupied. Let us hear,—“ Upon entering some houses, (says he) I have been struck with the following inconsistency, the heads of them would not suffer any member of the family to read the nonsense and wickedness which the vagabond pamphlet-sellers bring to their doors. Yet I have seen lying on their table,

or sideboard, a volume which they themselves had been reading, calculated to instruct their household in the darkest mysteries of vice.*"—

What! publicly professing a zeal for the deepest mysteries of goodness, and privately instructing themselves in the DARKEST MYSTERIES OF VICE!!! This is a sad secret disclosed. It was somewhat unguarded to publish the fact, but surely it should either have been reported with the most indignant censure, or not at all. Is such rank and impious hypocrisy amongst his religious followers, to be merely noticed as *inconsistency*? I know not what such sort of conduct may denote in the *evangelical* world, but in the *moral* world, we should certainly not have found so soft a term for it.

When we reflect how wonderfully the mind of every individual is influenced by early instruction; and the readiness with which we imbibe any opinions, however erroneous, or any doctrines however irrational, according to the books put into our hands at

* Sermon by the Rev. John Clayton jun. On the Danger, &c. p. 17.

a time of life when we are not competent to examine the foundation of those opinions, or the truth of those doctrines; we cannot but deem it of the greatest importance that such works only should be employed in the moral education of the youthful mind as may enlist all the faculties of its reason on the side of truth and virtue. It is well observed by a profound philosophical writer, that "if the multitude must be led, it is of consequence, surely that it should be led by enlightened conductors; by men who are able to distinguish truth from error; and to draw the line between those prejudices which are innocent and salutary, (if indeed there are any prejudices which are really salutary) and those which are hostile to the interest and virtue of mankind."*

By what are those writings which strive to make religion subservient to private happiness and public virtue,—by what are they to be superseded? By the Pilgrim's Progress.—Tillotson, Barrow, Atterbury, Newton,

* "Elements of the Philosophy of the human mind." By Dugald Stewart. p. 31.

Locke ; all must retire and give place to John Bunyan ! Addison, Young, Johnson, Hawkesworth, names dear to religion and learning, must yield in veneration to the Tinker of Bedford !! It is round his bust that the new evangelists bind their holy fillets ! It is at his shrine they burn their incense of praise, and bring their burnt offerings of adoration. The labours of one pious Editor are insufficient to illustrate his beauties ;* the work of exposition is allotted therefore to various hands, that each may have a chance for immortality, and that the annotations may be worthy of the text.—And they are so.

It is the exact coincidence of his doctrines with their own, that endears him so powerfully to these anti-moralists. This it is that exalts him to the highest pedestal in their Pantheon. “Many” say his evangelical Editors, “have read this book with a kind of

* A late Edition of the Pilgrim's Progress, is published with NOTES on the First Part, by the Rev. J. NEWTON, and OTHERS, and on the Second Part, by the Rev. Dr. Hawker.

rapturous pleasure, though they have not understood the Author's design."*—It is fortunate for a certain class of Authors, that there are so many readers of the description alluded to, that admire a work the more, the less they understand it. The present annotators, however, have given every assistance towards decyphering any difficulties that might stand in the way of a shallow comprehension. Take the following as a specimen:

“In the advice of Worldly Wiseman to Christian, you have a true picture of SELF-RIGHTEOUS MORALISTS, who are the *greatest enemies to young converts*.”†—What opinion

* See Preface, p. 6.

† As a further sample of their utter hatred of moral virtue, and of those teachers who enjoin the performance of our religious duties. I shall adduce the following Notes, that the public may be aware of the tendency of this work, and of the additional obligations they owe to the Editors of this body of Divinity.

(Note, p. 25.) “The *moralist* and *self-righteous* legalist, are lulled up in a false peace, and see not the evil of their heart, or the sinfulness of sin, till the law does its office, by working wrath in the conscience.”—

These explanatory notes require to be explained them-

it is natural to ask, do these persons hold that is so fatally false? it is this, they “think that the *practice of morality* is sufficient to recommend them to the favor of God.” —A dreadful opinion this to be en-

selves. What is the meaning of “the law doing its office by working wrath in the conscience;” it would be well if these evangelists would translate their jargon into something like common sense, that those who examine their doctrines might have a chance of understanding them.

The dull reader is thus assisted to understand the character of Ignorance,—

“In the character of IGNORANCE you have an exact description of our decent MORALISTS, who expect Heaven as the reward of their good works.” (Note, p. 128.)

Again—“The language of IGNORANCE exactly agrees with the *fashionable divinity* which is *retailed* in most of our *modern pulpits*. They do not in words reject the Redeemer’s righteousness; but by *the terms and conditions* which they enjoin, in reality they make it of none effect.” (Note, p. 153.)

In the second part of these ‘hints,’ I shall develop more fully the pernicious tendency of this very popular work. As an allegory the Pilgrim’s Progress has amused children who are naturally pleased with whatever relates to giants and castles, nothing else could have secured it a moment’s attention beyond the age of infancy, but when its doctrines are to be taught as the religion of their riper years, it is necessary that the readers of it should be put upon their guard.

* Pilgrims Progress with notes, by the Rev. Mr. Newton, Dr. Hawker, and others, p. 13.

tertaind in this profligate age ! Considering the numbers in this city of London, that recommend themselves to the notice of the police magistrates by the violation of the laws, and recollecting the assurance given to the public by one of the ablest and most active of those magistrates *, that—" if the prevailing immorality and profligacy among the lower orders of the people are not checked, very serious consequences are to be dreaded.†" The community will not be much indebted to the Editors of John Bunyan, for their endeavours to reverse this moral opinion. The practice of morality is quite sufficiently discountenanced without any assistance from this Tinker or his commentators.

No work could be better calculated for the dissemination of the evangelical principles, as they are called, than the Pilgrims Progress.‡ It treats the *moral* law with as

* Mr. Colquhoun, see his Treatise on the Metropolis, p. 39.

† Ibid.

‡ The following extract from the VILLAGE DIALOGUES

much vulgar derision as the most zealous of the fraternity could wish. They could not have made choice of a better vehicle for the propagation of *their* gospel. The Tinker, we all know, made no pretensions to innocence or integrity of life ; he wallowed in his vices with *humility*—he laid no claim, to *merit*.—In the town in which he lived he was even a premature example of coarse profaneness and vulgar debauchery ; it was not difficult for him to teach the doctrine laid down in this his treasure of divinity, that “it is then only we have right thoughts of God,” when we believe

(Vol. III. p. 23.) will serve to shew the high rank which this work holds, in evangelical estimation.

“Wor.—The Pilgrims Progress, I confess is an inimitable Drama, and *beautifully* describes the state of the real Christian in his spiritual progress ; yet BUNYAN, in the general way, happens to be the humble *treasure of Divinity in the poor man's cottage* ; and *I fear* is not so often to be found in the study of a *contemplative divine*.

“Lov.—Sir, If God had conferred on me the honour of being the Author of *the Pilgrim's Progress*, *I should have been tempted to have been the proudest man upon earth.*”—

This is singing to the praise and glory of the TINKER, with a vengeance ! His JOURNEYMEN lay it on with a trowel.

that he abhors all purity of thought and holiness of life, or, as he more concisely, and with more elegance expresses it, “when we think that all our righteousness stinks under his nostrils.”*—A precious teacher this!!! If we may judge by the licentiousness that prevails in low life, he has made many pious converts to this conviction. Is it to be wondered that the evangelical missionaries should so industriously recommend such a companion to *their* altar as the Pilgrim’s Progress? Have they not reason to be proud of such a disciple.†

* See the Pilgrims Progress, p. 153. The *Variorum* Edition.

† This renowned work has been given to posterity, in a *poetical* version, with explanatory notes, by the Rev George Burder. Author of Village Sermons, &c.

This gentleman has shown himself not less gifted as a poet than a preacher. His poem opens with uncommon spirit and *delicacy*.

“ ’Twas in the silent watches of the night,
When airy visions please us or affright,
Fast lock’d in sleep’s embrace, I *dreamt* a *dream* ;—
The Pilgrim’s journey was the fruitful theme,
I thought I saw him *in a certain place*,”—

The following lines were never exceeded in sublimity

Is it at all to be wondered at, that these preaching missionaries should be desirous to
by the production of any ballad-maker, within time of memory,

“ Great Beelzebub, the captain of this fiend,
Design’d my ruin ; therefore *to* this end
He sent him harness’d out ; and he with rage
That hellish *was*, did fiercely *me* engage
But blessed Michael helped *me*, and I, &c.

What Constable ever exercised his staff over an intruding crowd, in language more appropriate than the following :

“ Fast running *back*, each bare apostate cries,
Back ! back ! in that dark valley we have been,
And there such horrid spectres we have seen !
There sport the fiends and dragons of the pit,
Back ! back ! with us, if you have any wit.”

The Pilgrim, it seems, had no *wit*, so he ventures on, ‘sword in hand,’ through such a road as never before felt the print of mortal foot,—to the right, a ditch,—to the left a quag,—as the word *quag* is a novelty in our language, the reader must presume that a quag-mire is intended, but that the mire is sunk, or as lawyers would call it, is *merged*, for the sake of the measure. But it would be a pity to deprive the lovers of poetry of the description itself.—The concluding line exhibits a *new* and beautiful specimen of that poetical figure which is called *comparison*.

“ It was a dangerous path the pilgrim trod,
Sure never mortal trac’d so dire a road,
On his right hand a ditch tremendous lay,
A dangerous QUAG on t’other side the way,
To that when, carefully, the ditch *he’d* shun,
Into the *quag* his feet had nearly run ;

exclude REVIEWS and works of a similar kind from the circle of their followers? Is it not of course that they should reprobate

Avoiding that, 'twas hard to miss the ditch,
For now 'twas grown *almost as dark AS PITCH*.”*

The pressing invitation of DEMAS at *Lucre-hill*, is penned in the true style of *Broker's-row* :

“ Beyond the plain of ease, at LUCRE-HILL
DEMAS salutes them—‘Gentlemen,’ he cried,
‘*Pray have the goodness JUST* to turn aside
And view this rich, this noble &c.”

But the poetical fervor of the evangelist reaches its meridian when he snatches CHRISTIAN, like a brand from the burning, out of the path of *morality*, which he had been persuaded to enter by the advice of that *lying knave* WORLDLY WISEMAN.

“ My counsel take—Yon pleasant village see :
Delightful spot!—’tis call’d MORALITY ;
Thither with all convenient speed repair,
That honest man *Legality* dwells there.
Apply to him, you’ll get a speedy cure ;
Nor ever more fanatic fears endure.
There live in credit—live in pleasure there,
Nor shame, nor persecution ever fear.
Then Christian paus’d. ‘If this,’ said he, ‘be true,
There’s little more to suffer or to do.’
He turn’d aside to reach the place he saw,
And seek salvation by the *moral* law.
But ah ! no ease he found ; his fears rose higher ;
The mount he pass’d shot forth devouring fire. —
Mount Sinai fill’d his very soul with dread ;
It seem’d just falling on his guilty head.

* (Pag. 34.) The present quotations refer to the Second Edition of this poem.

every work in which their opinions are sifted,
and their doctrines discussed.* A bad cause

'Twas then, his conscience press'd with sin and fear;
Just then, he saw Evangelist appear.

'Christian! what business have you here?' he cried,
What *lying knave* has turn'd your feet aside?

'Twas *Worldly Wiseman*, rightly is he nam'd.

This denunciation of the *moral law* is the burthen of the ballad. It is hard to say which is most to be preferred, the piety, or the poetry.

* The evangelical fraternity, though they rail with such rancour against all reviews not attached to their interest, take care to review their own writings with abundant approbation. The ECCLECTIC REVIEW was instituted for that purpose. The pompous eulogium pronounced upon it by Mr. Clayton jun. in his *condemnation* Sermon, is written in a tone of arrogance that is truly ludicrous. The EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE also, which circulates every Month the number of about *twenty-four thousand*, sets apart a portion of its valuable pages to *review* the productions of the evangelical press, and to display their manifold merits. The *learned* Editor, in the instance I am about to adduce, has shewn to the public how well qualified he is to decide and dictate in the republic of letters. In the last number of this renowned work, this *learned* Editor expresses some doubt respecting the faith due to a literary discovery announced in the Marseilles Gazette, Oct. 20th. and winding up his detail, he exclaims with all the poignancy of *classical* scepticism,

Credat Judeas Appelles ! *

This immortal PAINTER is here, for the first time, ranked with the sons of circumcision!!! the Jew APPELLES!!!

* See the Evangelical Magazine of last Month. (Nov.) p. 527.

has no chance for success but in striving to asperse the character, and if possible to destroy [the credibility of the witnesses produced against it. Those who wish that truth should be extracted, can stand firm and fearless, whatever evidence is produced. They have no wish to shun inspection, or escape inquiry, but whoever has doctrines to establish or maintain, that will not bear the inspection of reason, will endeavour to escape its power, by appealing from its jurisdiction.

So strenuous are the efforts of these new gospel leaders to root out of the minds of

As this learned Editor and theological *reviewer*, takes his Latin from hearsay, it may be useful to him, for the avoidance of future blunders, to enquire from whence the quotation is made, before he ventures to decorate his evangelical labours with such specimens of classic lore. The line with which he meant in the present instance to sanction his incredibility, he will find in Horace. Sat. 5. l. 100. I refer him to the original that he may not hereafter corrupt the text of the classics, as he does the text of the Scriptures. His latin, and his logic, may pass muster with the readers of John Bunyan, and the *Village Sermons*,—Nonsense, makes no stumbling-block in the way of *their* creed. With them absurdity is sure to be well received if it comes well recommended.

the multitude all veneration for the divine lessons of our religion, that not satisfied with rendering virtue and morality of no estimation, they even make the gospel of God defeat itself, by openly teaching the people that our Saviour was talking in banter, when he enjoined obedience to the Commandments as necessary to eternal life. An evangelical preacher, whom we have before had occasion to notice, declares this most expressly. He takes as his text that part of the gospel in which the young man enquires of the Redeemer himself the way to life eternal. And he represents the whole as a trial of logical skill, in which an ignorant question is parried by an *ironical* answer.—“Observe,” says he, “the masterly and judicious mode in which the assault is made; to his enquiry *what good shall I do that I may have eternal life?* Jesus replies, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* By this reply does he either insinuate the possibility of purchasing heaven by obedience, or seriously advise the persisting in

such an attempt? NO."*—I declare it makes one shudder to see any one standing in the awful station of a public teacher of religion, thus distorting its instruction, and destroying its efficacy. How will it be with us in the end, if those who should be the instruments of reclaiming the ignorant from guilt and error, thus continue to lure them to the one, and lose them in the other. I do protest that I know not by what fatal perversion of intellect, any persons can bring themselves thus to think and to teach; and, that not content with delivering such delusive impiety from the pulpit, they should deliberately circulate it through the medium of the press. It is to me matter of utter astonishment how any man can read such Sermons, with his mind broad awake, and not throw them on the floor with disgust and indignation.

* SERMONS chiefly designed to elucidate some of the leading doctrines of the gospel, by the Rev. Edward Cooper, Rector of Hamstale Ridware, Chaplain to the Earl of Courtown, &c. I find this MR. COOPER'S SERMONS, in Mr. Clayton's commendatory list of Books. The reason is obvious. He is an evangelical bird of the true feather.

Not only do these anti-moral missionaries exert themselves at home, but every effort which the ardour of fanaticism and vanity can inspire, is employed to 'evangelize the heathen,' as it is called; and not only are the more opulent of their deluded followers stripped, but even the poorest among them are plundered* to support the expense of foreign missions, conducted in that spirit of ignorant and ill-directed enthusiasm, which the Scripture expressly reprobates as a 'zeal without knowledge.' Missions teaching the mystic doctrines of calvinism to savages that cannot count their fingers; and inculcating the mysteries of an abstruse creed, to poor wretches struggling with famine,—accustomed to follow the lead of their passions,—and whose minds are so dark,

* Under the title of *EVANGELICANA*, in the *Evangelical Magazine* for the last Month, is the following article,

"The following anecdote relating to the journey of Mr. COLLISON and Mr. FREY, to make collections for the Missionary Society, may be worthy of notice:—At——, in Yorkshire, after a handsome collection on the preceding evening, a poor man, whose wages are about 28s. per week, brought the next morning at breakfast-time, a donation of twenty guineas. Our friends hesitated to re-

as with great difficulty to admit the plainest and most simple principles of common honesty.

If those writers whom I have expressly and by name adverted to, were the only persons engaged in the propagation of those principles from the pulpit and from the press, which go so directly to degrade, in the es-

ceive it; doubting whether it was consistent with his duty to his family and the world to contribute such a sum; when he answered to the following effect: "Before I knew the grace of our Lord, I was a poor drunkard: I never could save a shilling. My family were in beggary and rags; but since it has pleased God to renew me by his grace, we have been industrious and frugal; we have not spent many idle shillings; and we have been enabled to put something into the bank; and this I freely offer to the blessed cause of our Lord and Saviour.—This is the SECOND donation of this same poor man, to the SAME AMOUNT !!!"

Whatever these evangelists may think of such conduct, they ought to be ashamed of thus basely taking the advantage of this poor ignorant enthusiast, and depriving his family, *in times like these*, of such a sum as FORTY GUINEAS, when their united earnings, amounted only to 28s. per week. Instead of meanly profiting by a flash of fanaticism in this poor creatures mind, they had better have added something to his hard earnings, and have counselled him to preserve them, in order to provide against the various unforeseen distresses by which poverty, in old age, is too often overtaken, and against which it is for the most part very ill provided.

timination of the multitude, the true practical religion of christianity with all its venerable train of moral duties and moral feelings, I should not have thought it worth while to employ so much of my time and pains, to press the subject on the attention of the public. But what I have here given is only *a specimen* of the manner in which this hostile confederacy is conducted; the numbers concerned in, and connected with it, are immense almost beyond belief. These evangelical anti-moralists swarm in every town in the kingdom, and are daily multiplying their disciples in every hamlet and village throughout the country. * And the entire devotion of the lower classes to these itinerant instructors, who train them to a systematic contempt of the moral law, and withdraw them from all dependance on the practice of their duty as men and as christians, is such as de-

* In the very front of the Evangelical Magazine for the last month, (of which work the author of *Village Sermons* is the editor,) an Advertisement is inserted for "an *active young Man*, who has suitable qualifications for an ITINERANT PREACHER, in a neighbourhood where there are *several populous Villages*. A Single Man," it is added, "would be preferred."

mands that at least the community should be put upon its guard, and that those to whom its welfare and prosperity are entrusted, should not sleep at their post.

What is the object of all those laws which make up the system of Criminal Jurisprudence, but to punish offenders against the *moral law*? What are the laws of God or man made to prevent, but offences against *morality*? What are murder, theft, forgery, fraud, and the long train of crimes which are punished, according to their degree of enormity, with fine, imprisonment, transportation, and death—what are these, but so many violations of the *moral law* of the Gospel?—From what does sin and guilt of every kind arise, but from the neglect of it?—What is infidelity, intemperance, debauchery, gambling, and vice of every description, but so many breaches of *moral duty*?—What but a reformation of morals can save the nation from sinking under the weight of its private profligacy, and its public crimes?—Are not the multitude enough excited by the numerous temptations which assail them in this opulent and licentious metropolis to violate the laws of mo-

rality, but they must be taught from the pulpit to slight it? Must the press be made an engine, and by the priesthood too! to destroy that *moral law*, on which alone the foundations of the world can stand secure? Must the divine word be perverted to the purpose of weakening the efficacy of virtue?—Must the crusade against morality be carried on under banners stolen from the altar of God?—

At this tremendous crisis, England—unshrinking and alone—abandoned by all the vassal powers of Europe—is still strong in courage and in hope. ‘We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.’ At this eventful period, surrounded by the wreck of empires, England is the great ATLAS that supports the moral world. Thus situated, it is more than ever necessary that she should cultivate that high tone of honourable feeling—that moral rectitude of mind—by which she stands distinguished above all the nations of the earth.—These have hitherto been the noble attributes of the national character; I trust

they will long continue so to be. But the hope is visionary—the expectation is vain—if the public mind is gradually to slide under the sway of a class of public instructors such as I have described.

To what I have said at present, I shall add more hereafter.—In addressing myself as well to the legislature, as to the public, I feel no intention, not the slightest, to excite a spirit of persecution towards those men whose teaching I protest against. I revere too much the private liberty of individuals, and that spirit of toleration which pervades and presides over that Constitution which is our glory and our boast—I revere these too much to wish that error of any kind should be opposed by any other resistance than argument, or any other weapon than Reason.—But holding, as I do, in the utmost veneration, the rights of private freedom and of private judgment—I still do not think that the members of this new spiritual body should be favoured,—as to a certain degree they are,—by special immunities, and fostered by exclusive privileges. I do not think that the open and perpetual propagation of doctrines so

hostile to moral virtue—so subversive of that public prosperity, of which moral virtue is the soul and the cement—should not only obtain a license with the readiest facility—but that such license should bring with it an exemption from certain burthens attached to other classes of the community. This, and much more, ought neither to be admitted nor endured.—The evil is not slight, far from it.—But if it is to meet with encouragement, instead of counteraction, the probable event may deserve to be considered while yet the preventive can be applied; because, when the event itself shall arrive, reflection may be nearer at hand than the remedy.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

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flection may be nearer at hand than the remedy.
to some such view of the subject, and to the
end of the first part, I have now arrived.
I have now to state the reasons, which I
think you will find to be altogether convincing,
that the proposed law, and to recommend it to
your serious attention, and to persuade you to
its passage, and to its execution, and to its
all that shall tend to the good of the
country, and to the happiness of the people.

Sedgwick, James,

Hints to the public and the legislature, on the nature and effect of
evangelical preaching

Bd.: 1

London (1808)

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